Christian Stoicism and Politeness: The Making of the Social Ethics of the Scottish Enlightenment

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Thesis Abstract

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Exploring the moral theories that underpinned eighteenth-century Scottish society has become a key component of Scottish Enlightenment historiography. Leading figures of the Enlightenment, including Hugh Blair, William Robertson and Adam Smith, examined human nature, morality and activity in a distinctive manner. In the course of their studies, these literati came to view the ethos of the commercial society that was evolving around them from a unique perspective.

More specifically, numerous historians of the Enlightenment have noted the important role played by the Moderates of the Church of Scotland in shaping the 'moral sciences.' Like Smith, the Moderates emphasized the benefits of commercial activity, not least the refinement of manners, civility and politeness that came with the 'universal opulence' of developed economies. It fell to senior Moderates like Blair and Robertson, and their more junior colleague, John Drysdale, to emphasize Christianity's role in the commercial world order and to safeguard the Church's position as a moral bulwark against corruption or luxury.

Historians correctly argue that the Moderates developed a type of 'Christian Stoicism' to reconcile matters of faith and polite secular ethics. Yet the full nature of 'Christian Stoicism' has been under-explored. Some historians suggest that 'Christian Stoicism' was merely a system of practical moralising; others suggest it was essentially a political tool to encourage loyalty to the Hanoverian order. These conclusions belie both the depths to which the Moderates analysed matters of faith and ethics, and the sophistication of their interest in Stoicism.

This thesis advances our understanding of Enlightenment thought by examining the role 'Christian Stoicism' played in texts by Blair, Robertson and Drysdale, texts that have until now received comparatively little scholarly attention. After examining Calvinist, seventeenth-century Neostoic and early eighteenth-century moral philosophy in the first three chapters, the thesis considers the roles played by faith, virtue and order in Blair's Sermons, Robertson's An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge Which the Ancients Had of India, and Drysdale's Sermons. It then considers Adam Smith's influence on these Moderates. This examination shows how the Moderates blended private and public Christian obligations to define 'Christian Stoicism,' a philosophy that embodied the correct principles for a commercial society.

Declaration of Original Work

I confirm that the material presented in this thesis is the result of my own research, and that I am responsible for the composition of this thesis.

Ingrid Ann Merikoski
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List of Abbreviations

BL	British Library
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
MS	Manuscript
NLS	National Library of Scotland
TMS	The Theory of Moral Sentiments by Adam Smith
WN	The Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith

Introduction[1]

Few societies in Europe have undergone times of such unprecedented economic, cultural and philosophical ferment as Scotland experienced during the eighteenth century. Following Scotland's union with England in 1707, the country's economic fortunes were transformed by gaining wider access to English commercial markets, as well as to England's European and North American trading routes. The consequences of this increased prosperity for Scotland's social and intellectual life were immense. By mid-century, new sources of wealth in society ushered in an era during which refinement in learning, manners and civility became the hallmarks of civilised members of Scottish society.

It fell to the intellectual leaders of this era, the Scottish Enlightenment, to define the social, moral and political ethos of the commercial society evolving in their midst. As Fania Oz-Salzberger has recently noted, "...There was a powerful motivation to create a feasible philosophy for the new Scotland...,"[2] that underscored Scotland's place in the British order, while highlighting its ability to make distinctive contributions to British social and intellectual life. For our purposes, the Scots' most notable contribution came in their formulation of 'the

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[1] I am very grateful to the Earhart Foundation for its generous support of my doctoral research from 1993-97.

[2] Ferguson, Adam, An Essay on the History of Civil Society, (ed.) Oz-Salzberger, Fania (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), see Oz-Salzberger's introduction, p. xiii.

science of man', a comprehensive set of social and moral theories through which the full dynamics of commercial society were explored.

More specifically, as historians and social theorists, the Scots created 'categories' through which economic, social and moral progress could be explained, justified and encouraged. David Hume (1711-76), Adam Smith (1723-90), Adam Ferguson (1723-1816), and Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), among others, defined these 'categories' by investigating the principles of human nature that affected the way eighteenth-century commercial polities operated. They explored the roles played by virtue, imagination, sense and reason in daily life. In so doing, they investigated the nature of society itself, and examined the responsibilities of individuals in it. The resulting dialogue became a means for encouraging the evolution of a harmonious polite commercial society, characterised by tolerance, sociability and eloquence.

Since the publication of Richard B. Sher's pioneering work[3] on the Scottish literati who were also members of the Moderate Clergy of the Church of Scotland, Enlightenment scholars have noted the important role the Moderates played in shaping discussion about the moral dimensions of civil society and polite social ethics. Like Adam Smith, the Moderates emphasized the benefits of commercial activity. It fell to senior Moderates such as Hugh Blair (1718-1800) and William Robertson (1721-93), and to their junior colleague, John Drysdale

[3] Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985).

(1718-88), to emphasize Christianity's role in the commercial world order and to safeguard the Church's position as a moral bulwark against corruption or luxury.

Sher and others have correctly argued that the Moderates developed a type of Christian Stoicism to reconcile matters of faith and polite secular ethics. This thesis suggests, however, that the full nature of Christian Stoicism has been under-explored. As we will see, some historians reduce Christian Stoicism to a system of practical moralizing; others suggest it was essentially a political tool to encourage loyalty to the Hanoverian order. These conclusions are useful, but they belie both the depths to which the Moderates analyzed matters of faith and ethics as well as the sophistication of their interest in Stoicism.

The thesis suggests that the system of morality described in Christian Stoicism transcended the mechanical application of polite principles to daily life by blending private and public virtue for the sake of moral, ethical and social improvement. The blending resulted not only from the absorption of polite principles inherited from earlier English and Continental discussion about well-mannered behaviour, but also from the Moderates' profound reflection about the nature of virtue and the manner in which it could be practically applied in daily life. The thesis develops these points by examining the role Christian Stoicism played in texts by Blair, Robertson and Drysdale, tests that until now have received comparatively little attention from Enlightenment scholars.

Before considering these texts, which will be described below, the thesis opens in Part I, chapters one and two, with a general review of the Neostoic discourse that

arose in Protestant Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter one examines the contributions of John Calvin and Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), who emphasized common themes in Christian teaching and ancient Stoicism. Chapter two discusses how European debate on Neostoicism widened and spread in the seventeenth century. It explores the popularity of Neostoic themes in England and suggests that the ongoing discourse on Neostoicism was bound to be well known to Scottish literati in the eighteenth century.

These chapters are followed by chapter three, which considers the manner in which aspects of Continental discussion about the nature of society and human activity were translated into Scottish intellectual life by Gerschom Carmichael and Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746). It discusses the unique contributions Hutcheson made to the study of moral philosophy in Scotland, which laid the foundation for the development of 'the science of man'.

In chapters two and three, we will also see that from the end of the seventeenth century, theories derived from the natural law tradition of Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94) formed the context within which Scottish moral philosophy developed. The influence of Pufendorf's theory of sociability will be examined, which contributed to his identification of property as a crucial social institution, a notion that was of central interest to the Enlightenment literati. Part I, chapter three continues by considering the nature of politeness by reviewing its antecedents in seventeenth-century French thought as seen through the work of Jean de la Bruyère. Part I concludes by discussing how the leading British exponent of politeness, Joseph Addison (1672-1719), conveyed moral

messages to members of British commercial society through the publication of the daily journal, *The Spectator*.

In Part II, chapters four and five, readers are returned to the matter of Moderate Christian Stoicism by examining the roles played by faith, virtue and order in Hugh Blair's sermons and William Robertson's An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India (1791). Blair is best remembered for his work on rhetoric and belles lettres, however his religious thought as reflected in his sermons offers a clearer picture of what the nature of his Christian Stoicism was. In chapter four, it is argued that Blair encouraged his readers to cultivate private virtue, while remaining responsible and obedient citizens. Robertson's preference for the cultivation of public virtue is discussed in chapter five, with particular reference to his admiration for the Brahmins in ancient India.

The fact that various interpretations of Christian Stoic priorities existed among the Moderates raises questions about its philosophical coherence as a moral force in society. This matter is taken up in Part III, which investigates the Moderates' intellectual debts to Adam Smith's system of ethics vis-à-vis Christian Stoicism. In chapter six, Smith's image of natural theology and revealed religion is considered. As Smith's moral thought matured, his reliance upon Stoicism to investigate the spiritual dimensions of human life increased. This reflected the influence of Hutcheson, whose earlier emphasis of virtue, duty and self-command influenced Smith while he was Hutcheson's student at Glasgow.

In Part III, chapter seven, the manner in which John Drysdale promoted the Christian Stoic agenda through his sermons is reviewed within the context of Smith's influence upon him. Drysdale's sermons are characteristically didactic in tone and are distinguished from those of his more eloquent peers by their forthright style. Drysdale was a pragmatist, who focussed not upon the finer points of the Enlightenment's wider philosophical debates, but on the practical application of Christian Stoic virtue and order to the lives of his parishioners. The section concludes by suggesting that the Moderates did indeed rely upon Adam Smith's system of ethics to add a philosophical coherence to Christian Stoicism. Rather than interpreting this reliance as an intellectual weakness in Christian Stoicism, however, the Moderates viewed it as a vindication of Christian Stoicism's place within Enlightenment's 'science of man'.

Part I

The Rise of Neostoicism and Its influence in Early Modern Scotland

Prologue

The sixteenth century brought significant changes in perceptions of the proper relationship between religious and secular interests in Europe, which were manifested clearly in the rapid growth of commercial activity throughout the continent. The conquest of the New World contributed to a rapid increase of wealth among the colonial powers and to the expansion of the European market. These in turn led to the establishment of new centres of financial power; the rise of the bourgeoisie; the growth of commercial companies; and the demise of medieval agrarian communities. The foundations of Europe's economic strength broadened as new spirits of nationalism grew with trade.

The religious and social consequences of these developments were considerable, particularly for the leaders of the Reformed churches who faced an immediate responsibility to define religious opinion toward economic enterprise and material progress. During the Middle Ages, social theory and matters of economic doctrine were defined by canon lawyers, including matters of contract and property law. As the prosperity of individual states increased, matters of social and economic concern fell under the jurisdiction of the state.

Europe's new prosperity posed casuistic problems for Reformed theologians. How were the new commercial energies in society to be contained so as to prevent healthy economic action lapsing into greed and avarice? Did economic prosperity necessarily risk the introduction of greater social or personal immorality? What was the proper role of the individual in society? Were the Reformation's leaders gong to respond to these kinds of questions as the Scholastics did during the Middle Ages by grafting new social forces with their interpretations of man's spiritual end? R.H. Tawney pointed to a wider tension looming over these specific challenges to the Reformers, namely the tension between the "... triumph of the commercial spirit over the traditional social ethics of Christendom ..." versus the "... logical connexion between changes in economic organisation and changes in religious doctrine."[4]

While tensions between religious and secular interests increased as religion came under growing pressure from materialism and rationalism, there were avenues of thought available to those scholars and theologians who wished to foster constructive dialogue between philosophy and religion. One of the more productive of these avenues was found in Neostoicism, a school of thought that amalgamated key themes in ancient Stoicism with Christian principles to promote virtue among individuals and order in society. Part I provides a general review of the Neostoic discourse that arose in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth

[4] Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London: Penguin Books, Reprint, 1990), p. 92.

centuries, and then traces the influence of this school on the Continent and in Great Britain.

Chapter One

John Calvin and Justus Lipsius: Neostoicism as Christian Stoicism

Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a review of how two central figures in the sixteenth century treated matters of morality, conscience and public duty by relying on the teachings of Christianity and a renewed philosophical interest in ancient Stoicism: John Calvin (1509-64), the Reformed leader who influenced Scotland most directly; and, Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), a Flemish humanist who introduced a Christianized form of Neostoicism into European intellectual life that became increasingly popular as a guide to practical and political life.

Calvin and Lipsius focussed on matters of morality and social responsibility. They were educated in a common humanist tradition that sprang from the Renaissance revival of classicism, yet they came to their tasks of advocating virtue and obedience in society from different perspectives in terms of their formal roles. Calvin was a clergyman, whose primary task was the propagation of the Reformed word of God. Lipsius was a scholar and educator, a committed Christian but one who concerned himself primarily with political and social commentary. They shared, however, a number of common values that are important to note from the outset.

Both men paid particular attention to the role conscience played in regulating human behaviour. Both had a profound belief in the need to maintain social order and political stability. Both studied the human condition while recognizing that individuals were exposed to temptation in direct and personal ways. Both believed that temptation in its various forms had to be resisted to live in accordance with the moral order of God. In the comparatively prosperous world of sixteenth-century Geneva, where Calvin spent the majority of his adult years, or the Dutch Republic, where Lipsius lived, this rather general formula for governing life, a call to resist temptation and an appeal to one's rational nature, placed considerable pressure on the functioning of individual conscience and powers of self-command to regulate and maintain moral standards.

This chapter works from the premise that Neostoicism was a key 'philosophical product' devised in the sixteenth century to reconcile matters of faith and reason, and to encourage obedience and order in society. In later chapters, the extent to which Neostoicism was taken up by European intellectuals will be examined. Here it is important to trace aspects of Neostoicism in Calvin's and Lipsius' thought, and to explore their admiration for and problems with certain Stoic themes.

The chapter will begin by examining Calvin's humanism and the extent to which he did or did not seek to amalgamate his Christian faith with sympathetic Stoic principles. It will then explore Calvin's political philosophy that reflected a wider sympathy with classical republicanism. Attention will then turn to Lipsius'

Neostoicism, with a view to understanding how he deliberately blended Christianity and Stoicism to provide a means for cultivating virtue in Dutch society in the aftermath of the Republic's turbulent civil wars. The chapter will conclude by suggesting that some of the concerns about morality and philosophy raised by Calvin and Lipsius were taken up by Scots in the eighteenth century, who cared deeply about maintaining ethical standards when social, philosophical and political conditions were changing and evolving around them.

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Calvin: Tensions between Faith and Philosophy

Calvin's guidance to his followers on morality should be examined within the context of his wider social thought, while bearing in mind his personal commitment to an intensely practical understanding of the role religion played in society. In his seminal work, The Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536), the reformer discussed questions of moral interaction in society through an analysis of Christian freedom, ecclesiastical power, and political administration. Human beings, he suggested, lived under a twofold government: the spiritual and the temporal, or the government of God and that of a given civil administration. Duties and obligations proceeded from both, which when combined formed a set of universal imperatives that directed the correct course of Christian life.

Calvin, and Calvinism as it evolved as a religious movement, emphasized that theology had to be 'world-affirming' in order to triumph over the forces of sin prevalent in daily life. It was through worldly activity that the Christian Church

confirmed its involvement in society, and sanctified positive human endeavours. By tying faith and 'world-affirming' activity, Calvin recast Christianity as a 'committed' religion, underscored by a dedication to apply the truths of the Gospel to practical daily life. Included in the spirit of this renewed Christianity was the implication that individual believers assumed active responsibility to live according to the dictates of Christian morality circumscribed by the Providential order.[5] Faith became a matter of action motivated by pious reflection and constant awareness of the frailties of human nature.

The imperative to sanctify human experience permeated Calvin's thought, and extended into private life to include matters of personal morality, not least in determining how to avoid the temptations brought on by new wealth in society.[6] Calvin taught that individual believers, like the Christian Church as a whole, best addressed moral challenges through engagement with the world rather than through speculation.

Calvin, like Martin Luther, appealed to the structures of good conscience, what Max Weber called 'psychological sanctions', to meet the challenges of a new materialistic age. Both reformers recognised the need to reconstruct doctrine and ecclesiastical government to reflect changing social mores apparent in early modern European society. Calvin's unique perspective on all types of social interaction was that he directly linked the minutiae of daily life with the process of sanctification, so that, as Alister McGrath has pointed out, "... the entire

[5] The points made about the transformation of Christianity into a 'committed' religion are Alister McGrath's.

sphere of human existence ..." was brought "... within the scope of divine sanctification and human dedication."[7]

John Calvin was born at Noyon in Picardy on 10 July 1509. His father, Gérard Chauvin (the original form of the family name), served as registrar and notary to the local bishop. Chauvin intended his son for the clergy, and because of his ecclesiastical position, the bishop permitted John Calvin to join the cathedral chaplaincy school at the comparatively young age of twelve. Chauvin's position in the cathedral's administration also gave his son access to a number of Picardy's prominent families, in whose company Calvin cultivated a self-assured refinement in personal manners that set him apart from other boys of his immediate social rank.

The chronology of Calvin's movements in early adulthood is debated by scholars, however, it is sufficient to note that at the urging of his father, Calvin travelled to Paris between 1521-23 to begin studies in Latin and theology at the Collège de la Marche, within the University of Paris. From there he joined the theologically orthodox Collège de Montaigu to study philosophy, where the curriculum centred around Aristotelian natural philosophy. It is also generally suggested that while at Montaigu, Calvin first came into contact with Lutheranism, the tenets of which were enthusiastically debated by Parisian intellectuals from about 1519.

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[6] McGrath, Alister, A Life of John Calvin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1977), p. 219.
[7] Ibid., p. 220.

After taking his licencié in arts degree, Calvin unexpectedly changed the focus of his scholarly attention. He left Paris between 1526-8 for the University of Orléans to take up studies in civil law, which were interrupted by the death of his father. Bernard Reardon suggests that while it is not clear that Calvin showed any particular allegiance to the Reformation at this stage, his religious sympathies may have been affected by the liberal atmosphere of Orléans. What is certain is that because Orléans was also a recognised centre for humanist scholarship, Calvin had ample opportunity to continue his extensive reading of classical authors.[8]

In his appreciation of linguistics and rhetoric, Calvin was a humanist in an Erasmian or Renaissance rather than twentieth-century sense of the term.[9] He followed established norms to analyse texts and literary styles for the purpose of investigating the development of ideas, rather than the propagation of a particular humanist ideology. Sixteenth-century humanism did not reflect the secular tendencies of humanism in the Enlightenment, and its priorities were considered within the framework of God's natural law or order. In following these methods, Calvin demonstrated a commitment to humanism's respect for man's natural intelligence and dignity, characteristics that resonated strongly with Stoicism.

This ancient school enjoyed particular favour in humanist circles, much in part due to the popularity of Cicero's treatment of rhetoric and learning. It was

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[8] See Reardon, Bernard, Religious Thought in the Reformation (London and New York: Longmans, 1995), pp. 149-54. The fact that Erasmus studied at Orléans in 1500 helped establish the university's humanist credentials.

perhaps for this reason that Calvin followed Erasmus in producing a commentary on Seneca's *De clementia* in 1532. While the book was a financial disaster because Calvin was forced to pay for its publication personally, the project testified to his interest in Stoicism and probably enhanced his intellectual credentials among humanist friends.[10] Furthermore, as Reardon suggests, it is likely that Calvin appreciated "... an affinity between the Stoic ethic and Christianity",[11] not least a common reliance on the forces of providence to provide an ordered structure to the world. Like some Scots in the eighteenth century, Calvin's primary criticism of Stoicism rested in his objection to its doctrine of complete indifference to the affairs of the external world, and yet this indifference often appeared in modified form in the Neostoic tradition.[12]

The task of exploring Calvin on Stoicism is somewhat complicated by the fact that he left little formal commentary on it. Rather, sources and references appear in a variety of texts. There is less on Stoicism in The Institutes than in Calvin's Commentaries on the Bible. His translation of Seneca does not include many notes or marginalia. A more coherent impression is gleaned from various sources

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[9] For a helpful discussion about the nature of the Renaissance and early modern European humanism, see Mackenney, Richard, Sixteenth Century Europe: Expansion and Conflict (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1993), pp. 107-28.

[10] See Battles, Ford Lewis, 'The sources of Calvin's Seneca commentary', in Ford Lewis Battles et al., John Calvin (Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology) [Abingdon, 1966], pp. 38-62; and (eds) Battles, Ford Lewis and Hughes, A.M., Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's 'De Clementia' (Leiden, 1969).

[11] Reardon, Bernard, Religious Thought in the Reformation, p. 150.

[12] It is interesting to note that at least at this early stage in his career, Calvin did not seem to share the Stoics' strong emphasis of the need for virtue in life.

compiled in secondary literature that attest to the fact that Stoicism remained a constant reference point in Calvin's mind, albeit at times a negative one.[13]

As a Christian, Calvin reacted against a fatalism in Stoicism that negated the need for redemption in life, and indeed any anxiety human beings naturally felt about death and proving worthy of salvation. Calvin believed that anxiety was a necessary element in human design, for one of the purposes of faith was to assuage spiritual torment. The sinner who cultivated Stoic indifference, which implied suspension of anxiety and fear, risked disassociation from the body of faith that led to salvation:

> "For a man to flee and shudder at death" was "a natural disposition that can never be fully controlled," and "no one willingly hurries toward it." Those indifferent to death "see the whole earth mixed together in confused variety and its individual elements, so to speak, tossed hither and yon; and yet, as if they did not belong to the human race, they imagine they will remain always the same, liable to no changes."[14]

Calvin believed that anxiety was the 'mother of prudence', that it encouraged vigilance against evil and the vicissitudes of life. It was also quite natural that individuals care about 'worldly affairs', most particularly the events and circumstances of their own life: indifference, then, was counterproductive. Bouwsma makes the interesting suggestion that Calvin wished to "reclaim for Christianity what the Stoics considered the two great obstacles to human

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[13] In the following paragraphs, quotations are drawn from translations by William J. Bouwsma. Bouwsma's translations and transcriptions of Calvin were recommended by Dr. David J. Wright, Dr. John Bolt and Professor Heiko Obermann.

[14] Bouwsma, William J., John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 32. The quotes are taken from Calvin's Commentaries (on II Timothy 4:6; Deuteronomy 32:48; Genesis 50:2; Acts 2:24; Hebrews 2:15).

happiness: fear and hope."[15] Rather than place fear and hope in opposition to productive life as the Stoics did, Calvin argued for their inclusion:

"but experience shows that hope truly reigns where fear occupies part of the heart. For hope does not operate in a tranquil mind, nay it is almost dormant. But it exerts its power where it uplifts a spirit worn down by cares, soothes it when troubled by grief, and supports it when it is stricken by terror."[16]

A more positive compatibility between Stoicism and Christian interests is found in the quest for personal reformation through the right exercise of will, which Calvin contextualizes in comments on the soul:

"There are two primary endowments of the soul. The first is its capacity to reason, the other to judge and choose. The soul of man excels first in intelligence or reason, then in judgment, on which choice and will depend."[17]

The right use of will extends to matters of self-command, which becomes essential to the restraint of passion and temptation that are dangerous both to Christianity and Stoic tranquility.

"Each of us should watch himself closely, lest we be carried away by violent feeling," so we may "bridle our affections before they become ungovernable. ... If we seek to exceed our limits, we manifestly tempt God."[18]

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[15] Ibid., p. 44. The point is Bouwsma's.
[16] Ibid., p. 44. The quote is taken from Calvin's Commentaries (on Psalm 56:4).
[17] Ibid., p. 88. The quote is taken from Calvin's Commentaries (on Ezekiel 11:19-20).
[18] Ibid., pp. 88-89. The quotes are taken from Calvin's Commentaries (On Jeremiah 20:14-16; Calvin's Sermon 51 on Job; Isaiah 6:11).

Calvin does not bring an explicit notion of progress into the process of self-reflection and self-reformation, but there is an undercurrent of the possibility of improvement in his tone that we will see also appears in Seneca. There is a tension between Calvin's portrayal of Stoicism in its most extreme form: one of complete detachment from the world or *apatheia*, and a Stoic-like process of continual self-assessment that is actively encouraged. Despite this, readers are often returned to the problem of adversity. In adversity:

"God tests his own, he examines them by afflications, he puts them like gold in the furnace, not only to be purged but also to be known." This was "the foundation of our philosophy." Further, "True patience is not the stubborn endurance of adversities (as the Stoics maintain in praising virtue an unyielding hardness), but willing submission to God because we trust in his grace."[19]

One area where Calvin seemed at ease with the Stoics, even in his later years, was in their mutual regard for community. Calvin associated community with humanity, and the obligations to one's community with wider duties to human kind. People are:

"bound together by a sacred chain," that "should be embraced in one feeling of love. … All the blessings we enjoy have been entrusted to us by the Lord on this condition, that they should be dispensed for the good of our neighbors. … Society consists of groups that are like yokes, in which there is a mutual obligation of parties." If followed then "that men have been begotten for the sake of their fellows to share one another's toil, to take counsel together, to share themselves and their possessions, insofar as it is for the public good."[20]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 183-84. The quotes are taken from Calvin's Sermons No. 5 and No. 7 on Job; Commentaries (on Psalms 46:4, 41:2 and 89:31); and The Institutes, Book III).
[20] Ibid., p. 201. The quotes are taken from Commentaries (on Acts 13:36; the Institutes, Book II; Ephesians, 5:22; Sermon No. 71 on Job).

Stoicism's emphasis on the dignity of the human being and providential design resonated strongly with humanists, and in these two aspects Stoicism and Christianity found a common vocabulary. In any instance where Stoicism lent itself in a positive way to the propagation of Christian teaching, Calvin followed other Protestant reformers such as Huldrych Zwingli[21] in highlighting useful resemblances. If Stoicism distorted the lessons of revelation, either directly or by implication, Calvin rejected it.

ii

The Appeal of Classical Republicanism as a Means to Social Order

If Calvin's formal commentary on Stoicism was somewhat sporadic, his understanding of classical republicanism and the framework it provided for a desirable civil order was more focussed. Calvin made close associations between civil and religious authority that manifested themselves in the structure of Genevan civil society when he dominated the political scene there from the 1550s. Calvin made these associations within the context of his examination of Christian freedom, ecclesiastical power and political administration in the closing chapter of The Institutes, where he described in detail the twofold government under which humanity lived.

[21] Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), the leading figure in Swiss Protestantism, who became a Reformer independently of Martin Luther and who predated Calvin on the Genevan scene. Zwingli was known for his humanist interests. He drew from Erasmus when arguing against sensory aids in religious observance. Seneca was among Zwingli's favourite classical authors. The circle that arose around Zwingli formed the core of the radical Reformation.

This twofold system was predictably divided between the spiritual and temporal worlds. In the spiritual world matters of salvation and piety were resolved; in the temporal world, or in civil society, citizens lived within the confines of the political order determined by the magistrates. Citizens enjoyed degrees of personal freedom in accordance with the laws of society. While similar constraints were placed upon believers in the spiritual world in that they had to follow the laws set by Providence, it was in the spiritual realm that believers exercised the greatest degree of Christian freedom, which Calvin suggested was a:

"... matter of prime necessity, and without a knowledge of it [Christian freedom] consciences dare undertake almost nothing without faltering; often hesitate and draw back; constantly waver and are afraid."[22]

Calvin's political thought was built upon two firm foundations: a doctrine of obedience to given authorities; and, a division of authority within Reformed societies between civil and religious powers. Because governments were instituted by Providence to guarantee social stability and personal security, Christians were required to obey civil magistrates, or God's 'vice-regents', and to follow the dictates of their pastors and religious tribunals. While the Church tended to the spiritual needs of the 'inner man', civil authorities catered for the requirements of 'outward morality' and civil justice. Magistrates were:

"... vicars of God, they should watch with all care, earnestness, and diligence, to represent themselves to men some image of divine providence, protection,

[22] Calvin, John, The Institutes of Christian Religion, [1536 edition] (ed.) Battles, Ford Lewis, p. 175.

goodness, benevolence, and justice. And they should perpetually set before themselves the thought that 'all are cursed who do in deceit the work of God' [Jer.48:10p.]."[23]

In order to ensure the greatest possible degree of social harmony, Calvin stated that a complementary relationship between civil and ecclesiastical institutions should be devised in Christian society. It was within the framework of civil society operating through secular and religious authorities that all social action occurred. In other words, the temporal world contextualized all human interaction and matters of external morality, while human beings were capable of transcending worldly concerns in the spiritual world.

Generally Calvin suggested that the Church concerned itself with the promotion of true doctrine and the provision of sacraments to the faithful, but in practice the Church's influence extended far beyond strictly spiritual interventions in society. Calvin also instructed that the state should maintain law and order, but the state was obliged to safeguard religious principles and assist the Church in promoting moral discipline:

"Civil government as its appointed end, so long as we live among men, to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to define sound doctrine and the condition of the church. ... It also prevents idolatry, sacrilege against God's name, blasphemies against his truth, and other public offenses against religion arising and spreading among the people ... In short, it provides that a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity be maintained among men."[24]

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[23] Ibid., p. 210.
[24] Calvin, John, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV, xx, 2f (1559 edition), quoted in Bernard Reardon, Religious Thought in the Reformation, p. 161.

While Calvin did not deviate from the complementary model of government he developed in the earliest editions of The Institutes, his political philosophy evolved as a consequence of his experiences in Geneva. He did not endorse consistently any particular form of established polity as being most compatible with Reformed Christianity. Nevertheless the underlying themes of his political thought seemed to remain constant, particularly his respect for liberty and his dedication to order.

These stemmed from the deep influence of the teachings of classical republicanism on Calvin's early political thought, with its pervading spirit of justice and rejection of absolutism. Calvin highlighted the traditionally close association made by classical republicans between civic and religious duties. He reflected an acceptance of traditional civic virtues in his advocacy of discipline and obedience in civil and ecclesiastical matters. A spirit of sobriety and industry pervaded Genevan society that mirrored the civic virtues of classical republicanism; however in addressing such virtues, Calvin tended to treat them as products of Divine wisdom rather than the results of human action.[25]

Despite his admiration for certain republican virtues, Calvin was suspicious about the efficiency of republicanism, not least because rivalries frequently arose between republican leaders. Calvin was well aware of the bitter factional infighting that often broke out between Geneva's magistrates, even at the height

[25] Höpfl, Harro, The Christian Polity of John Calvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 158. Höpfl notes that unlike the republicanism of seventeenth-century England, the republicanism of Calvin's day was not a secularizing force per se.

of his influence in the city. Political divisions were often exacerbated by similar tensions in ecclesiastical bodies.[26] Social disorder was not unknown in Geneva, and the rivalries that developed between magistrates often extended to their political allies and families. Despite these things Genevan republicanism usually fostered an expedient social harmony that was of greater importance in the Calvinist scheme than specific philosophical objections to the established form of government. This harmony continued to be the basis for preserving liberty, both in the strict republican sense of directly electing governors, and in the wider sense of guaranteeing legal rights.[27]

Calvin's republicanism manifested itself clearly in his opposition to tyranny:

"When tyranny has lost its concern for justice, there are no limits to its wickedness; and lamentations do not soften it but aggravate its cruelty. And flatterers excite it by saying that the shortest way to control subjects and keep them quiet is so to oppress them that they do no even dare to open their mouths, and if they complain or murmur that they should be more harshly treated so that they may be hardened to servitude and, as it were calloused to bondage. Tyrants therefore do not rest from their injuries ... until the wretched people have altogether given up."[28]

The traditional identification of Calvinism as a religion of resistance stems from Calvin's anti-absolutist beliefs. The presentation of God's sovereignty in the world remained the focus of religious life, therefore the notion of unlimited

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[26] Calvin was critical of republics that failed to replicate the harmony Geneva enjoyed between civil authority and ecclesiastical discipline.

[27] Höpfl makes the important point that Calvin did not fully define his conception of liberty. See Höpfl, Harro, The Christian Polity of John Calvin, p. 159: "It would be entirely in keeping with the character of Calvin's political thought to read him as favouring a guided and controlled kind of popular participation, such as was practiced at Geneva, ..."

[28] Calvin, John, Commentaries, Exodus 5:9 quoted in Bouwsma, William J., John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 207-8.

power resting in the hands of a single individual was untenable. Yet because he believed that the existing polities of his day were necessarily creations of Providence, and because he rejected the utility of political philosophical speculation, Calvin accepted the legitimacy of the absolutist governments around him. It was:

> " ... an idle pastime, ..., for men in private life to dispute over what would be the best kind of government in the place where they live." Consequently " ... if you fix your eyes not on one city alone, but look around and glance at the world as a whole, or at least cast your sight upon regions farther off, divine providence has wisely arranged that various countries should be ruled by various kinds of government. For as elements cohere only in unequal proportion, so countries are best held together according to their own particular inequality."[29]

It is sometimes suggested that Calvin's failure to recommend a particular form of political polity as being best suited to the principles of the Reformed faith reflects his greater concern with the nature of ecclesiastical rather than political government. This would seem reasonable given his ultimate religious priorities, and it also would explain why Calvin frequently altered his opinions about desirable forms of civil government. Calvin's ambiguity about political polities may also explain why the tone of his political philosophy is more reactive than prescriptive. However difficult it is to pin down what Calvin thought the full nature of a holy commonwealth ought to be, his commitment to the underlying principles of justice and obedience in society remained constant.

After 1543, Calvin endorsed mixed forms of government, recommending that the aristocracy assumed key responsibility for directing civil policy, which seemed to

detract from the republicanism of the magistrates. This change illustrated his wider concern with the question of the legitimacy of established governments, and their ability to faithfully execute their duties regardless of their form.[30] Perhaps more importantly, however, was the point that Calvin felt his images of desirable forms of government had to remain sufficiently malleable in order to accommodate the rulings of Providence as Divine revelation unfolded.

The forces of Providence operating in Calvin's scheme underscored his firm conviction that ultimately it was impossible to disassociate civil and political matters from religious ones, regardless of the institutional structure of any given Godly commonwealth. Theological and moral considerations remained at the centre of Calvin's understanding of law, whether civil or natural, and Divine authority remained the root from which all earthly authority proceeded. Therefore Providence provided a link between Calvin's moral scheme that governed the personal conduct of citizens and the regulatory mechanisms in society that oversaw all types of social transactions.

In an eighteenth-century context, one immediately questions the relationship between a providentially-based and a historically-based foundation for political or social authority. This raises an interesting question about Calvin's view of history and whether his Godly commonwealth was particularly historicist in nature. It would seem not. Following Erasmus and the humanists, Calvin tied

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[29] Calvin, John, The Institutes of Christian Religion, Book IV, xx, 8 as quoted in ibid., p. 207.
[30] See Höpfl, Harro, The Christian Polity of John Calvin, p. 153: Höpfl concludes that Calvin "... remained committed to the view that a scripturally determined 'form' of ecclesiastical polity might and ought to cooperate with whatever form of civil government it happens to find established."

the value of secular humane sciences to their usefulness as means for social and moral instruction. This was particularly true for philosophy, which Calvin held in greater esteem than history because of its close association with rhetoric. In his early commentary on Seneca, it is Seneca the philosopher and rhetorician that occupied Calvin's interest, and Höpfl suggests that "... 'history' was what it remained to him throughout his life, ..., a useful ancillary to other preoccupations, and in particular it was *histories*, the relating of edifying episodes."[31]

Secular history was limited by the deficiencies of human experience, custom and conscience. Like each of these, history had to be enhanced by Biblical teaching in order to have any transcendent utility. In the Calvinist providential framework, each historical event was treated in isolation as a function of God's will. History was not a continuous development, nor was it an impetus for change or thought. If this conclusion accurately reflects Calvin on history, it suggests a deeply ahistoricist dimension to the reformer's thought that would not be compatible with the Enlightenment Scots' development of a stadial theory of history and progress.[32]

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[31] Ibid., p. 10.

[32] The four-stage theory of history was devised during the Scottish Enlightenment to analyze history and civilisation by examining distinct periods of human development. In his Lectures on Jurisprudence, Adam Smith divided these periods into the hunting age, the age of shepherds or the pastoral age, the farming or agriculture age and the age of commerce. (See Smith, Adam, Lectures on Jurisprudence [eds] Meek, R.L., Raphael, D.D., and Stein, P. [Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982], pp. 14-17. The organizational structure of society during each stage was examined carefully, as were its civil and social relationships. As societies developed, notions of property rights and trading relationships grew. The Scots came to view the four-stage theory of

Christian Freedom and the Conscience as Regulator of Social Conduct

In The Institutes of Christian Religion, Calvin outlined a rigourous discipline that underpinned the social and religious activity of the Elect based on his assumption that the complete rule for life is found in Scripture. From this discipline arose a system of social ethics broadly built upon the basis of commercial enterprise and urban industry. These ethics included the suggestion that the economic motivation behind commercial transactions of the Elect were not necessarily alien to the religious life, or the life of the spirit. R.H. Tawney has taken the view of Calvinism that:

" ... it is perhaps the first systematic body of religious teaching which can be said to recognize and applaud the economic virtues. ... Its enemy is not the accumulation of riches, but their misuse for purposes of self-indulgence or ostentation. Its ideal is a society which seeks wealth with the sober gravity of men who are conscious at once of disciplining their own characters by patient labour, and of devoting themselves to a service acceptable to God."[33]

Calvin consistently recommended that the universal characteristics of righteousness and piety provided the ultimate guide for human action be it in the temporal or spiritual realms. He referred to faith continually to find solutions to practical moral questions in society. The distinctions Calvin made between religious and practical worlds were never completely resolved, which illustrates a point made by a number of historians that Calvin's " ... ecclesiology constantly

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history as a means for interpreting human history as a history of progress. These matters will be discussed at greater length in Part II.

[33] Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, p. 114.

tried to minimize the problem of the gap between general imperative and specific conduct."[34]

Calvin relied heavily on the functioning of individual conscience to underscore and maintain the discipline he recommended. Conscience was guided by individual sense of obligation not to exceed the dictates of natural justice and 'the golden rule.'

The degree of latitude Calvin gave to individual conscience was compatible with his purpose of creating a sanctified society through personal discipline. However it posed an immediate problem in terms of a tension that was bound to arise between what may be right for the individual and what suited the " ... external order of society."[35] This problem of the contrast " ... between the external order of society and the moral standards recognised as valid by conscience or reason of the individual ..."[36] was of similar significance to Hume and the Enlightenment Scots. Calvin's understanding of conscience was complex, but it played a crucial role in determining the moral criteria by which individuals lived.

For Calvin the conscience acted as a kind of subjective mode of revelation that was closely related to a natural instinct or an awareness of Divinity in the human mind. This rudimentary instinct served to regulate conduct and to remind human beings of their essential dependence upon their Creator. Conscience was also a

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[34] Höpfl, Harro, The Christian Polity of John Calvin, p. 180.
[35] Ibid., p. 117.
[36] Ibid.

universal innate sense of God in mankind that accounted for a universality of religion across human society:

"To man is left no reason why he should seek in himself his righteousness, power, life, and salvation; for all these are in God only; cut off and separated from Him by sin, man will find in himself only unhappiness, weakness, wickedness, death, in short, hell itself. To keep men from being ignorant of these things, the Lord engraved and, so to speak, stamped the law upon the hearts of all. But this is nothing but conscience, for us the witness within of what we owe God; it sets before us good and evil, thus accusing and condemning us, conscious as we all are within ourselves that we have not discharged our duty, as was fitting."[37]

Because conscience was closely related to a sense of divinity, it acted as a kind of knowledge of God's will within the human heart. Through God's benevolence and grace, believers knew not only the difference between good and evil, but understood the corrolations between the law of God and the laws of nature under which human life operated. Furthermore it was through the conscience that human beings became aware of their obligations to God and to society. Thus the moral law became a combination of natural laws and conscience engraved in the heart of each individual:

"It should be clear that the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon men's hearts. Consequently, the entire scheme of this equity of which we are now speaking has been recorded in it. Hence, this equity alone must be the goal and rule and limit of all laws. Whatever laws shall be framed to that rule, directed to that goal, bound by that limit, there is no reason why we should disapprove of them, howsoever they may differ from the Jewish law, or among themselves."[38]

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[37] Calvin, John, The Institutes of Christian Religion, [1536 edition] (ed.) Battles, Ford Lewis, p. 16. Calvin frequently quoted Cicero in support of his conviction that this sense is universal in mankind.

[38] Ibid., p. 216.

Ultimately, individuals sought knowledge of God through conscience combined with an appreciation of God's works. Because every human being was capable of grasping the lessons of the moral law, senses of obligation and moral sanctions arose throughout society. When conscience lapsed, which like Augustine and the Stoics Calvin thought was inevitable, the organizations of human society (especially the Church) and the mechanisms of the state were in place to re-establish order and administer punishment:

> "We see that some form of organization is necessary in all human society to foster the common peace and maintain concord. We further see that in human transactions there is some procedure which has to do with public decency, and even with humanity itself. This ought especially to be observed in churches, which are best sustained when all things are under a well-ordered arrangement, and which without concord become no churches at all."[39]

Following similar themes in later Roman Stoicism, Calvin believed man was 'a creature of fellowship', hence society was comprised of the natural groupings of Church and state. While the Church was concerned with the spiritual health of the inner man, the state regulated external conduct by guaranteeing administration of restrictive and distributive justice. The church and the state maintained complementary agendas, though the laws of God remained supreme throughout. The state promoted piety. The duty of the magistrate, Calvin believed, was "... to apply the law of God, implanted on the hearts of all and clarified in the Scriptures, to the affairs of civil society."[40] However in no

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[39] Ibid., p. 204.
[40] Höpfl, Harro, The Christian Polity of John Calvin, p. 9.

circumstance did the external laws of the Church or the state bind conscience itself: free will is maintained within Calvin's theology. The external laws of society imposed moral obligations which the Elect were honour-bound to follow, but this did not interfere with the functioning of individual free will or conscience.

The relationship between free will and conscience is better understood by turning to Calvin's discussion of Christian freedom and the spiritual side of his system of government. In The Institutes, Calvin was sensitive to the complexity of the operations of freedom and the conscience, and was well aware of the temptation to use Christian freedom as a pretext to:

> "... shake off obedience toward God and break into unbridled license; partly they disdain it, thinking such freedom cancels all moderation, order, and choice of things. What are we, boxed in by such perplexities, to do here? Shall we say goodbye to Christian freedom, thus cutting off occasion for such dangers? But, as we have said, unless this freedom be grasped, neither Christ nor the gospel truth is rightly known. Rather, we must take care that so necessary a part of doctrine not be suppressed, yet at the same time that those absurd objections which commonly arise from it be met."[41]

Calvin instructed that Christian freedom consisted of three parts, some of which echoed a Stoic call for a certain degree of detachment from worldly considerations in order to reflect on one's purpose and obligations. The first part involved freeing oneself from immediate considerations of temporal laws and works for the purpose of concentrating solely on seeking 'assurances of justification' by faith alone. By rising above the law, so to speak, human beings

removed themselves from the more mundane aspects of life that distracted the conscience. Believers were then free to turn attention from themselves and look only to Christ as the model of consistent moral goodness:

"The whole life of Christians ought to be a sort of practice of godliness, because we have been called to sanctification. The function of the law consists in this: by warning men of their duty, to arouse them to pursue holiness and innocence. But where consciences are worried how to make God favourable, what to respond and with what assurances to stand, if called to his judgment-there we are not to reckon what the law requires, but Christ alone, who surpasses all law-perfection, must be set forth for righteousness."[42]

The second part of Christian freedom was contingent upon the first, and consisted of the conscience naturally obeying the will of God once minds were free of the restrictions of worldly considerations. This was crucial for once the conscience mind operated only to please God, it was more likely that human action and individual works stemmed from pious rather than self-interested motives. In this sense, the purpose of Christian freedom was to encourage all to good.

The third element of Christian freedom was found in the fact that in Calvin's view, true Christians were not bound by any religious obligation to 'outward things', or to ceremonies that were inconsequential to the promulgation of true faith. Clearly alluding to what he considered to be the corrupting influences of the doctrinal rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, Calvin meant that Christians were not bound by any external observances that tended to foster

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[41] Calvin, John, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, [1536 edition] (ed.) Battles, Ford Lewis, p. 176.
[42] Ibid., p. 177.

superstition among the faithful. These external observances simply clouded judgment and interfered with the conscience:

"For when consciences have once ensnared themselves, they enter a long and inextricable maze, not easy to get out of. If a man begins to doubt whether he may use linen for sheets, shirts, handkerchiefs, and napkins, he will afterward be uncertain also about hemp; and finally, doubt will even arise over tow. … To sum up, he will come to the point of considering it wrong to step upon a straw across his path, as the saying goes. Here begins a weighty controversy, for what is in debate is whether God, whose will ought to precede all our plans and actions, wishes us to use these things or those."[43]

For those troubled by such doubts, Calvin continued, it was essential to remember that all outward things in life were subject to human freedom: by God's grace, human beings were masters of external things and they should not be distracted by them to the extent that this is forgotten. Quoting St. Paul [Romans 14:14], Calvin suggested that all outward things were " … subjected … to our freedom, provided our minds are assured that the basis for such freedom stands before God."[44]

The overriding lesson to be learned from the correct exercise of Christian freedom was that this freedom and the fruits gained through it were gifts of God. So long as these fruits were used responsibly and for the purposes that God intended, there was nothing to prevent Christians from enjoying them in the temporal world. Nevertheless, it was important to remember that Christian freedom was a spiritual thing, and that any material benefits derived from actions freely taken reflected God's glory rather than any intrinsic human merit, and here

[43] Ibid., p. 179.

Calvin differed dramatically from the Stoics for there was no equivalent to God's grace or beneficence in Stoicism.

The limited endorsement of personal gain underscored the comments Calvin made in The Institutes about acceptable degrees of material comfort in society. There were very few members of society in positions of wealth who did not delight in shows of extravagance and ostentation. However if one used material wealth 'indifferently', in a modest and generous fashion, it could be considered a benign if not beneficial part of the Providential order:

"Where the heart is tempered to this soberness they will have a rule for lawful use of such blessings. But should this moderation be lacking, even base and common pleasures are too much. It is a true saying that under coarse and rude attire there often dwells a heart of purple, while sometimes under silk and purple is hid a simple humility. This let every man live in his station, whether slenderly, or moderately or plentifully, so that all may remember God nourishes them to live, not to luxuriate. And let them regard this as the law of Christian freedom; to have learned with Paul, 'in whatever state' they are, to be content; to know how to be humble and exalted."[45]

Therefore both essential and nonessential material possessions were to be seen as gifts from God that had value beyond strict utility. By extension less tangible gifts were also reflections of God's beneficence. For example, beauty in nature, form or habit of dress could be considered manifestations of God's blessings. It was the plan of Providence that some things in the world had value "... apart from necessity, for comeliness and decency." God endowed silver, ivory and marble with "... a loveliness that renders them more precious than other metals or

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., p. 181.

stones. Did he not, in short, render many things attractive to us, apart from their necessary use?"[46]

"Let this be our principle: that the use of God's gifts is not wrongly directed when it is referred to that end to which the Author himself created and destined them for us, since he created them for our good, not for our ruin. Accordingly, no one will hold to a straighter path than he who diligently looks to this end." Just as one was obliged to "... bear abundance moderately," so poverty should be borne" ... peaceably and patiently." "Therefore," Calvin continued," even though the freedom of believers in external matters is not to be restricted to a fixed formula, yet it is surely subject to this law: to indulge oneself as little as possible; but, on the contrary, with unflagging effort of mind to insist upon cutting off all show of superfluous wealth, not to mention licentiousness, and diligently to guard against turning helps into hindrances."[47]

Immoderation and greed were prevented by adhering strictly to one's allotted place in society:

"... they who have narrow and slender resources should know how to go without things patiently, lest they be troubled by an immoderate desire for them. If they keep this rule of moderation, they will make considerable progress in the Lord's school."[48]

A further sanction to appreciate God's blessings appropriately was based on the premise that come the day of final judgment, all members of the Elect were accountable to God for the manner in which they used his gifts. This was part of the process of justification and salvation, therefore it was essential to use God's gifts to promote chastity and purity. Like some later Neostoics, Calvin taught that good fortune brought an added imperative to contribute to the good of

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[46] Reference for this paragraph, Calvin, John, The Institutes of the Christian Religion [1536 edition reprint] (trans. and ed.) Battles, Ford Lewis Battles (London: Collins, 1986), p. 721.
[47] Ibid., pp. 722-23.

society given that one had greater means at one's disposal to do so. In other words, the greater one's personal means and privileges, the broader the range of his social responsibility became.

Calvin placed various sanctions upon the use of the fruits of Christian freedom based on the theological foundation of the doctrine of predestination. Before deciding upon any course of action in life, members of the Elect were called upon to search their consciences for an indication of God's will in favour or against that action. Action taken with due reverence for the will of Providence helped one to avoid excessive ambition, fickleness or other negative forces in life:

> "Therefore each individual has his own kind of living assigned to him by the Lord as a sort of sentry post[49] so that he may not heedlessly wander about throughout life. Now, so necessary is this distinction that all our actions are judged in his sight by it, often indeed far otherwise than in the judgment of human and philosophical reason."[50]

Ultimately, Calvin warned his followers that Christian freedom was granted by God for the purpose of advancing the quality of life of those in society rather than for personal gain, and this governing principle extended especially to those who held positions of wealth and influence in a Christian polity. Like any other member of the Elect, Calvin's Christian was expected to operate within the confines of knowledge of Scripture and Church doctrine; individuals were called upon to engage in worldly activity efficiently and within the framework of civil

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[48] Ibid., p. 723.
[49] Ibid., footnote 9, p. 734: "Cf. Cicero, On Old Age XX. 73: 'Pythagoras forbids us to desert our fort and station in life unbidden by God, our commander.'"
[50] Ibid., p. 724.

law: efficiency was considered another gift from God that directly contributed to the promotion of civic duty.

Thus the nexus of the persona of the Calvinist Christian was obedience to God's law, the natural law, moral law and to the magistrates. The need for constancy in obedience to civil laws was such that it was a precondition of sanctification. Again given human imperfection, neither the conscience or any other single entity acted as a sufficient regulator of human action. Yet the combined restraint of conscience with the social mechanisms of a Calvinist polity seemed sufficient, in Calvin's mind, to regulate individual behavior and morality.

Harro Höpfl has suggested that, "Calvinism stood, in short, not only for a new doctrine of theology and ecclesiastical government, but for a new scale of moral values and a new ideal of social conduct."[51] It became the duty of members of the Elect to attempt to prove worthy of their predestined salvation by "... insistence on personal responsibility, discipline, and asceticism, and the call to fashion for the Christian character an objective embodiment in social institutions."[52]

These qualities permeated all dimensions of social life and human interaction.

As our discussion has evolved, Calvin seemed to remove himself from specific associations with formal Stoicism in favour of occasionally identifying broader

[51] Höpfl, Harro, The Christian Polity of John Calvin, p. 120.
[52] Ibid., p. 121.

compatibilities between Christianity and the tenets of the ancient school. His emphasis on duty, constancy, self-reliance and order remains a permanent facet of his social ethics, but it is ultimately religion upon which his followers must rely to contextualize the search for truth in life. His admonishment that Christians conduct their lives with a 'high seriousness" of purpose is a theme that resonates with philosophical perspectives beyond the Stoic realm.

We know Calvin sought to create a sanctified society through Stoic-like individual discipline; the challenge was to address the contrast between behavior determined by the external order of society and individual understanding of proper moral and ethical standards. At times drawing on positive connections between Stoicism, natural law, classical republicanism, and Christianity assisted in this process. Scots in the eighteenth century faced similar challenges as philosophers and historians developed new theories about the proper relationship between moral senses, the conscience, religion and reason. The immediate challenge in their era was to decide what, if anything, was substituted for religion as the bedrock upon which the moral foundation of commercial society was built.

iv

Lipsius: A Model Neostoic

Calvin's Geneva was the epicentre of European intellectual life for much of the sixteenth century, but as Gerhard Oestreich has noted by the end of the century Geneva's international influence waned as, "The spiritual impulses which originally emanated from the Confederation, and especially from Geneva,

gradually ceased."[53] The languages of European political and theological thought went through a period of transition as the seventeenth century opened, and Geneva's importance was eclipsed by its northern neighbours, particularly by the newly independent Dutch Republic.

The Dutch Republic of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century provided a markedly different example to Geneva of a society struggling to define its religious character within the framework of a commercial polity. This was especially true given that the power of religion as a cultural force was mitigated not only by the divisive experience of the Dutch Revolt (1555-90), but also by the legacy of an Erasmian tradition of free inquiry that predated the arrival of Calvinism, or indeed any reformed faith, in the Low Countries. One of the central challenges confronting the Republic was to define the balance of power between religion and the new political and intellectual forces that determined the character of the young Republic.

During the Revolt, the provinces of the Low Countries survived the collapse of the Habsburg dominion of the area, which brought with it the final victory of Protestantism over Catholicism. This was accomplished against the backdrop of deeply antagonistic debates within the Protestant community itself, and a polarization of regional political priorities based upon religious loyalties. The Low Countries divided north from south, creating two distinct cultures: in the north, the Protestant Dutch Republic, or United Provinces, founded as a

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[53] Oestreich, Gerhard, Neostoicism and the Early Modern State (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 113.

consequence of the Union of Utrecht (1579); in the south, a cluster of French and Dutch-speaking provinces retained Catholic identity, and over time aligned themselves with German states involved in the Counter Reformation.

The character of Dutch society, then was formed through a complex myriad of republican ideology, religious tensions and great economic prosperity. The power of the state was paramount in society, which permitted the limitation of ecclesiastical influence. The consequences of the Republic's prosperity for its intellectual and cultural life were immense, not least in the advancement of the arts, the promotion of intellectual and religious toleration, and enhanced support for institutions of higher learning. During the period of the Revolt, a conscious effort was made by the Republic's political and intellectual leaders to establish a new culture within the United Provinces that was based on religious toleration free of denominational friction. This manifested itself institutionally in the founding of the University of Leiden in 1575, where future leaders from various Protestant lands, including Scotland, were trained in humanist studies, theology, law, medicine, history and mathematics.[54]

Like other universities in the Netherlands, Leiden was influenced by Scholasticism and Aristotelianism, but a liberal spirit of free inquiry permeated the university despite the personal orthodoxy of many faculty members. The university's principal purpose, however, was the inculcation of a new spirit that

[54] In highlighting the support given by the Swiss Reformed Church for Dutch independence from Spain, Oestreich alluded to close relations between Swiss and Dutch educators. See ibid., p. 113: "Between 1575 and 1700, four hundred and nineteen Swiss matriculated at Leiden alone. At first they came mainly from Geneva, but later the Bernese became more numerous, … . Citizens of

provided "... an intellectual bulwark against 'tyranny' and religious oppression."[55] This involved the identification of two ideologies: Dutch Republicanism, which placed the good of the community above individual priorities; and a system of Neostoic ethics, which encouraged social harmony through the cultivation of virtue and obedience to the established order.

The humanist scholar, Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), introduced a form of Neostoicism into the Dutch philosophical spectrum that constituted a parallel discussion to an on-going one about republicanism. Lipsius, professor of history and law at Leiden from the 1580s, advocated the emulation of Roman Stoic virtues to establish a harmonious community composed of two elements: *imperium* (government) and *commercium* (economic and moral life). He encouraged individual citizens to pursue civic virtue for the mutual benefit of all members of society.

In essence, Lipsius followed in the tradition of the Renaissance revival of Stoicism by turning to Stoic moral philosophy to provide a model for a philosophical refuge from the deep political and religious divisions caused by the Revolt. He sought to do so by identifying a new moral code through which the transactions of daily life contributed to the cultivation of virtue in society. His method for identifying this code, essentially a code of ethics, drew particularly from the social and moral teachings of Seneca, who taught that it was possible for

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Zürich and Berne who were civic officials, military men or academics are known to have possessed copies of works by Lipsius."

[55] Israel, Jonathan, The Dutch Republic (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 198.

man to achieve degrees of virtue by viewing life as a state of progress towards wisdom.

Although Lipsius' philosophical genius was acknowledged by his contemporaries, including his friend Michel de Montaigne, and his key moral works Two Books on Constancy (1584), Digest of Stoic Philosophy and Physics of the Stoics (both 1604) remained popular for over a century after his death, Lipsius' contributions to the development of early modern European ethics has been overshadowed by those of later philosophers. We seek to redress this matter by reintroducing Lipsius into Scottish Enlightenment historiographical discussion.

The general political and religious tensions in Dutch society prompted Lipsius to develop a system of ethics based on universal truths in nature. The great challenge to morality within any successful commercial culture was to counter the problem of ethical indifference in society, which Lipsius used Stoicism to achieve. The problem of ethical indifference was one of degree: it was essential to identify a system of morals that did not involve philosophical or theological extremes. In order to accomplish this, Lipsius turned to Seneca, whose own moral and political essays instructed the Emperor Nero to avoid extremes of emotion that adversely affected political and moral decision-making. These will be explored below.

The essence of Lipsius' Neostoicism was a fusion of corresponding themes he identified between Christian morality and Stoic ethics. Lipsius' purpose in this

exercise, which involved twenty years of reflection, was to encourage his readers to use philosophy to broaden their practical understanding of their place in God's natural order, and to accept the notion that the useful life was one spent in the pursuit of wisdom. This progress towards wisdom provided a framework through which Lipsius re-cast the cultivation of morality and virtue as beneficial to the public order.

v

The Pursuit of Virtue as a Unifying Force in Society

Justus Lipsius (Joest Lips) was born to a Flemish Catholic family near Brussels in 1547. He was formally introduced to philosophy by the Jesuits in Cologne, where he received his early education. He later studied at the University of Louvain. As a young man he travelled in Italy and Germany, during which time he came into contact with the humanist scholar, Marc-Antoine Muret (1526-85).[56] At the relatively young age of twenty-two, Lipsius' first publication, Mixed Readings (1569), appeared. It was a series of commentaries on a selection of ancient authors, which displayed an early sympathy for Cicero.

Lipsius' life was characterised by two features that added a personal poignancy to his search for a system of ethics that encouraged harmony and tranquility: his career was often disrupted by the wars against the Spanish during the Revolt; and, he changed his faith on a number of occasions either to accommodate the prevailing sect of a university which employed him, or on occasion by genuine

personal choice. In 1572, Spanish troops confiscated Lipsius' property in Belgium. The philosopher fled to the University of Jena, which offered him a chair in history and eloquence on the condition that he subscribed to Lutheranism.

The matter of Lipsius' personal faith has been reconsidered recently by Brian Copenhaver and Charles Schmitt, who suggest that Lipsius was a Familist, or a member of the Family of Love, a sect with Anabaptism roots that had strong pacifist and anti-denominational tendencies. Familists believed in an invisible true church, and moved from one 'external observance' to another according to circumstances of a given moment in their lives.[57]

The 1570s remained a period of turbulence for Lipsius. Because of religious friction within the university faculty, Lipsius was asked to leave Jena unexpectedly. In the intervening period between Jena and his next appointment at the Catholic University of Louvain in 1576, Lipsius moved to Cologne. He took full advantage of having no formal post in Cologne by returning exclusively to reading and preparing new works on Tacitus. It was in this period, too, that Lipsius changed his philosophical allegiances from Cicero to Seneca.

It was at Leiden, where he was appointed professor of history in 1579, that Lipsius produced his best known works, Two Books on Constancy (1584) and

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[56] Muret was anti-Ciceronian.
[57] See Copenhaver, Brian and Charles Schmitt, Renaissance Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 264.

Six Books of Politics or Civil Doctrine (1589).[58] The former text was essentially a guide to the moral life, using Stoic moral philosophy as its model to emphasize the need for constancy and virtue in private and public dealings. The latter work described the key elements of Lipsius' political thought, which was concerned above all with the re-establishment of order on post-Revolt Dutch civil society.

It has been noted that Lipsius advocated the emulation of Roman Stoic virtues to establish a harmonious community or *societas* composed of two elements: *imperium* (government) and *commercium* (economic and moral life). He encouraged individual citizens to secure the *vita civilis*, or civil life, which he defined as "... that which we leade in the societie of men, one with another, to mutuall commoditie and profit, and common use of all."[59] The civil life was achieved through the pursuit of virtue, prudence and morality, and had to be sought within the framework of the established political polity. The political polity was itself contextualized by society. But it was with virtue and prudence that citizens should ultimately be concerned. Of the two, Lipsius wrote:

'...in the first [prudence] I follow the judgement of manie, in the other particularly mine owne: because I can not be induced to beleeve, anie can possibly be a good Citizen, except likewise he be an honest man. Without vertue, such wisdome should rather be subtill craft, and malice, and any other thing rather than prudence. And albeit, that by the sterne thereof properly, civill life be governed, yet it is not without the use, and aide, of the other loadstone [virtue]. ... All other humane things are not durable; for the glories of beautie, and riches is fraile, and slightly vadeth away, but vertue ever shineth, and is eternall: which thing is onely immortall in a mortall man."[60]

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[58] The original titles of these books were *De Constantia* and *Politicorum sive civile doctrinae libri sex* respectively.
[59] Lipsius, Justus, Sixe Bookes of Politics or Civil Doctrine (London, 1594), [Facsimile of 1594 translation by William Jones of 1589 original, Amsterdam and new York: Da Capo Press, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Ltd., 1970], p. 1.
[60] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

The focus of Lipsian Neostocism, then, was the state, or the civil government, which provided the unifying bond among citizens that underscored the foundation of the *vita civilis*. In his Six Books, Lipsius frequently quoted Tacitus, Cicero, Seneca and Livy to illustrate his further assertion that in addition to forming a basis for civil life, civil government served as its guardian.[61] As such, government, preferably the government of a prince, secured the greater good through securing the constant obedience of its citizens. However, a prince also served as the great educator of his people in the noble virtues, and he ruled for the benefit of citizens. Theoretically his devotion to duty restrained any ambition to dictatorship.

This preference for princes is indicative of an élitism in Lipsian political theory that applied across his philosophical spectrum, and reflected a Tacitean preference for aristocratic oligarchy. Lipsius did not intend his Neostoicism for the more lowly members of Dutch society, as Jonathan Israel has pointed out:

"... Lipsius forged a recipe for moral survival amidst religious and political upheaval, a Neostoic system of ethics and politics, which exerted an extraordinary fascination on a generation of Dutch educators, ... However, he saw it not as a recipe for the masses but for humanist scholars and the refined, publishing his books, ..., solely in Latin."[62]

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[61] Lipsius became known as a leading editor of Latin prose texts, and his editions of Tacitus (from 1574) were considered models for his (and subsequent) centuries. Lipsius began his study of Tacitus on his travels in Italy as a youth, and maintained a lifelong appreciation for the Roman historian's pointed epigrammatic style. He also respected Tacitus' approach to historiography, with its warnings against corruption at the courts of absolutist rulers. Several scholars have described Lipsius' overall style and philosophy as a combination of a Tacitean approach to politics and a Senecan approach to pragmatic ethics.

[62] Israel, Jonathan, The Dutch Republic, p. 566.

Lipsian Neostoicism sought to consolidate the power of the state by placing the armed forces at the centre of the promotion of civil order. Though he acknowledged the power of education to encourage civil obedience, Lipsius highlighted the self-discipline and devotion to duty instilled by martial life as a more efficient and tangible example of the positive powers of self-restraint and order.

Lipsius' endorsement of martial virtue and discipline extended into a wider social framework. Lipsius challenged citizens to appreciate that frugality and diligence not only contributed to their personal virtuousness, but that the cultivation of self-discipline enhanced the quality of their contribution to the common weal. In a sense, Lipsius offered a re-conceptualization of the role individuals played in society based upon an assumed connection between personal responsibility and civic duty. This, in turn, contributed to the rise of a Weberian-style work ethic among the Dutch and other urban European populations throughout the seventeenth century.

Following Roman Stoicism, Dutch Neostoicism placed greatest weight on the practical application of its principles to daily living, and the moral fortitude of its adherents. It was in this vein that Lipsius introduced *commercium* as companion to *imperium* in his social theory, but he did not develop a concept of trade, or a theory of commerce, beyond his tacit acknowledgement of the benefits Dutch society enjoyed from its commercial endeavors. His Neostoicism was practical and rational, but it incorporated *pietas* (piety) and *fortuna* (fate/fortune) into its

ethos.[63] These combined with *disciplina* (discipline) implied that Neostocism did not rely exclusively on rationality.

Like Erasmus and Hugo Grotius, Lipsius sought to maintain the Christian values that were essential characteristics of European identity in the new political climate of the early modern era. But the Reformation and Revolt proved that competition between denominations threatened order and political stability. The best alternative was to secure the position of Christianity within the political polity: to assure that as a cultural force, Neostoicism worked alongside Calvinism rather than usurped it. Lipsius described a means for achieving compatibility between philosophy and religion, then, by defining a kind of Christian Stoic theology in his politics that transcended denominational boundaries through *pietas* and *religio* (religion).

Like the Stoics, and like Calvin, Lipsius accepted the supremacy of Divine Providence over all facets of life except human will. Religion, or *religio*, consisted of a continual recognition of Providential order in the world. The motivation for constant spiritual vigilance stemmed from *pietas*, or the knowledge of the Divine within the human being, that fueled one's sense of duty. Associated with pietas were *fatum* (fate) and *conscientia* (conscience), which guided human will. Man must not, Lipsius argued, remove himself from the active life to such an extent that personal responsibility was negated by

[63] This followed the Stoic definition of *ratio*, or reason, combined with elements of *pietas* and *fortuna*.

resignation to Providence. Conscience prevented such a lapse, while acting as a touchstone of good and evil:

"Now Conscience ... is another offspring of pietie, and it is evident that she taketh her beginning from the roote of the worship of God. ... And in whose soule soever there is no religion, nor feare of God, there the seed of a good conscience is verie finall, and as it were choaked, and oppressed by bad ground. Now Conscience is a remaine, and sparkle, of right and perfect reason in man, judging and manifesting good or evill deeds. ... For we commonly say, Conscience is a pricking and sorowfull rememberance, to have violated the divine godhead, & not to have worshipped, ... And this feeling (or sense) being rooted, and fixed in man, lasteth while he liveth, and is not extinguished neither by force, nor fraud, we have received this conscience of God, which cannot be taken from us."[64]

It becomes clear that the political dimensions of Lipsius' Neostoic paradigm bolstered civil authority by giving it an autonomous historical rooting in republicanism, which contributed to the legitimization of maintaining a separation between civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Lipsius provided the Dutch citizen with a structured approach to life that linked an individual's practical and moral fortunes with God, his neighbour and his country: this structure accommodated the dual nature of the citizen as individual and as a member of society. In so doing, Lipsius extended Dutch republican theory beyond the realm of a strictly defined *civitas*, or republican civic society, to the broader realm of a type of Neostoic *societas*.

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[64] Lipsius, Justus, Sixe Bookes of Politics or Civil Doctrine, p. 8-9. (Contrast Lipsius on conscience with Seneca, who treated conscience purely as right reason. See, for example, Seneca, 'On Favours' in his Moral and Political Essays, (eds) Cooper, John and Procopé, J. F. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 291. "Indeed, I will go further, and say that sometimes a person can be grateful while seeming to be ungrateful, having been misinterpreted and traduced by people's opinion. Such a man can only follow his conscience. Eclipsed though it may be, it brings him joy, protesting against reputation and public opinion. Relying on itself for everything, when it sees a vast crowd on the other side with a verdict contrary to its own, it refuses to count ballots but carries the day with its own one vote."

Finally, while Lipsius may have been suggesting that his form of Neostoicism, with its Christian undertones, provided a clearer path toward civic virtue than did the Dutch Reformed Church or other religious sects, Lipsius recognised that the Church played a useful role as an arbiter of moral standards in the state. Ultimately, Lipsian Neostoicism did not seek to remove the Divine from society's moral or political equation

vi

Seneca and the Progress towards Morality in Life

In their moral and ethical philosophy, Neostoicism and ancient Stoicism shared the common purpose to make the personal and political lives of human beings as orderly as God's universe or the cosmos. The Stoic School was founded by Zeno of Citium (335-263 BC) in Athens, and his pioneering philosophy was refined and expanded most notably by Chrysippus of Soli (ca. 280-207 BC). Their combined teachings formed the core of the first of three Stoic periods: the early, middle and later Roman eras, the latter of which most directly influenced Lipsius, and, it will be argued in later chapters, the Moderate Clergy of the Church of Scotland.

The Early Stoics formally developed the central doctrines of their school and organized Stoicism into a system of philosophy that included a theory of nature, logic, ethics, epistemology and politics. Chrysippus, followed by Diogenes of Babylon (ca. 240-152 BC) and his successor Antipater of Tarsus (d. ca. 137 BC),

each contributed to the reformulation of ancient Stoicism with the notable result that over time Stoicism lost some of its originally harsh asceticism.

Panaetius (c. 185-109 BC) of the Middle Stoa was especially important in this softening process. He was the leading figure of the Stoic movement when its theories first made significant in-roads in Roman society. Panaetius recognised that the lives of individuals were deeply affected by the society of which they were part. He attached greater significance than the Early Stoa had to the presence of external influences in life. It was also Panaetius who introduced the notion of gradual moral progress as having value into the Stoic scheme, which departed from the early Stoic emphasis upon the pure ideal of the 'wise man'.

Despite its multiple revisions, the system of belief that underscored Stoic morality did not alter radically over the centuries. The Stoics viewed the world as a community governed by a supreme providence, which was described as a divine reason, nature, destiny, or even the spirit of the universe, by successive Stoic authors. It was man's ultimate duty to live in accordance with divine will, which manifested itself through the laws of nature; secondly, man had to resign himself completely to his fate as prescribed by providence. Living in accordance with nature included the development of reason, the possession of which was the sole distinguishing feature between human beings and beasts. It was only through living by these rules that human beings could find true happiness.

The Roman Stoics, Epictetus (ca. 55-135 AD), Seneca, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD), continued Panaetius' revisions. By teaching the Romans

to apply the practical lessons of Stoicism to daily life, the Roman Stoics developed a more 'sedate' form of their philosophy that recommended devotion to duty as a source of personal tranquility.

The appeal of Stoicism in early modern European history may be traced to the Renaissance revival of the ancient school, which had its roots in the publication of Petrarch's, On Remedies for Both Kinds of Fortune (1354). Using as his model a sixth-century piece by Martin of Braga which took its own form from Seneca, Petrarch discussed the nature of wisdom and the character of wise men in traditionally stoic terms. For Petrarch, as for the Renaissance and Neostoic philosophers after him, Stoicism lent itself favourably to the study of philosophy by Christians. In general terms, Stoicism was systematic in structure, morally rigorous and dependent upon a providential scheme to underscore its essential philosophical unity.

However Stoicism also posed problems for practising Christians. It placed the pursuit of virtue at the heart of moral life, which usurped the place of God as the focus of human morality. The imperative to virtue hinted at a determinism within the Stoic moral equation that challenged the traditional Christian understanding of Providential power by placing man in ultimate control of his moral life. Nevertheless, for Petrarch, and indeed for Lipsius, the corresponding themes between Christianity and Stoicism provided a useful conduit through which diverse sets of philosophical and theological views could co-exist.

It was stated above that the appeal of the later Roman Stoics, and of Seneca in particular, to Lipsius and his contemporaries rested on the fact that the main philosophical aim of their Stoicism was to lead men toward virtue. By conveying to human beings an understanding of nature and their place in the world, Seneca outlined a system of order and belief that enabled people to conduct their daily lives in accordance with divine will.

Stoic logic and physics provided the foundation for this process in Seneca's view, but it was Stoic ethics that remained paramount in his system. Further more, from a Christian point of view, Seneca made an appealing connection between goodness and wisdom that introduced a kind of benevolent impulse into the cultivation of virtue. Wisdom was the key to goodness in the sense that the truly wise man valued only genuinely good characteristics or things. Virtue proceeded from the blending of goodness and wisdom. Before turning to Lipsius' own moral philosophy, it is necessary to look in more detail at Seneca's contribution to the Stoic school.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (ca 4 BC-64 AD) was born in Cordoba in Roman Spain to an imperial procurator, Marcus Annaeus Seneca. Although his father's position was respectable, the family lived in the far reaches of the empire. Therefore Seneca had surprisingly few early opportunities to develop contacts in Rome itself. He was sent to Egypt while still a youth to stay with his aunt, Marcia, whose husband was the viceroy of Emperor Tiberius from 16-31 AD. Here he began to develop the administrative and political skills that served him so well when he eventually moved to Rome.

Seneca rose to prominence in Rome quickly through his work as a leading jurist and politician. He came to attention of the imperial court and became a senior adviser to numerous members of the imperial household over time. Often, due to the plotting of rivals, Seneca was sentenced to periods of exile at the hands of the Emperors Caligula and Claudius. He was eventually permitted to return to Rome, where he was made praetor in 49 AD. At the same time, the philosopher was appointed tutor to the child who became the Emperor Nero in 54 AD. For some eight years, Seneca acted as Nero's principle adviser, but fell from favour partly as the result of the fact that Nero was jealous of Seneca's popularity.

We know that the aim of Seneca's moral writings, indeed of his Stoic philosophy as a whole, was to lead people towards virtue by instructing them in virtuous principles. He emphasized that the exploration of pathways leading to virtue was equally important as defining the perfected state of *apathia*, or separation from the world, that occupied the Early Stoics.

The Early Stoa placed questions of the cosmos and ascetic detachment from the world at the centre of their attempts to make human lives as orderly as the universe. Rather than focussing exclusively on the perfection of the Stoic 'wise man', Seneca encouraged his readers to live a virtuous productive life according to the will of God, the author and guide of a prevailing order in nature that underpinned creation. Like the Greek and other Roman Stoics, Seneca acknowledged the use of reason as man's unique faculty to pursue virtue, and he

advocated the maintenance of self-discipline to ward off temptation in worldly activity that protected one from the vice.

Seneca wrote, according to John Cooper and J.F. Procopé, as an 'inward looking' moralist, whose political and moral essays display a constant tension between the ideal and the practical in life. Nevertheless human life retains an essentially positive character. Human life "... rests upon kindness and concord; bound together, not by terror but by love reciprocated, it becomes a bond of mutual assistance."[65]

Seneca's essays are comprised of three pieces, 'On Anger', 'On Mercy' and 'On the Private Life', each of which provides moral guidance in various forms. The essay, 'On Anger', is essentially concerned with discovering the means through which one rids oneself of harmful emotions, like anger, that disrupt the normally composed operations of the mind. The essay, "On Mercy', was prepared for Nero as a guide to kingship and pointed to qualities of 'leniency' that were the hallmarks of a wise and virtuous leader. 'On Private Life' recommended that wise men consider withdrawal from public duties in order to devote more time to cultural learning and philosophical contemplation. (This was a somewhat controversial view in that Stoicism had always associated mental activity with action.)

It is Seneca's discussion of mercy, however, that is interesting from an ethical point of view for two reasons. Firstly, the tone of the discussion provides an

interesting illustration of Seneca's approval of life being interpreted as a progress towards virtue. Secondly, it was the orthodox Stoic view that the Stoic man should make moral or ethical choices. Seneca seemed to qualify this in his recommendations to Nero by suggesting that compassion, indeed a kind of benevolence, was desirable in a leader, particularly if reason and virtue dictated it.[66] The deeper lesson in the essay seems to be a recommendation against extremes of behavior on the part of the leader, who must at all times appreciate the risks of being too indifferent to the consequences of his actions.

The essay is divided into two books: the first discusses the value of leniency in dealing with adversaries and the utility of acting mercifully towards subjects; the second discusses the nature of mercy in greater detail, describing mercy as a virtue. Seneca opened his discussion by calling mercy the 'royal virtue', which inspired hope in all people. Mercy should be shown towards the generally deserving, but also to one's enemies, who may be capable of 'being returned to innocence' once shown the errors of judgment that led them to act against a ruler. Of mercy, Seneca wrote:

"Of all the virtues, in truth, none befits a human being more, since none is more humane. That is a necessary point of agreement not only among ourselves with our view that man should be seen as a social animal born for the common good, but also among those who give man over to pleasure and whose every word and action looks to their own advantage. For if man seeks calm and leisure, he acquires here a virtue which, with its love of peace and restraint on action, suits his nature. Of all men, however, mercy becomes no one more than a king or prince."[67]

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[65] Seneca, 'On Anger' in ibid., p. 23.
[66] The ties between morality and benevolence were taken up by Francis Hutcheson for the Scots in the eighteenth century.
[67] Seneca, 'On Mercy' in his Moral and Political Essays, (eds) Cooper, John and Procopé, J.F., pp. 131-32.

Be that as it may, Seneca reminded Nero that each human being was capable of acting mercifully, even if mercy of a king had a higher quality about it because it affected a greater number of lives than did mercy granted between individuals. He also suggested that mercy was part of a multitude of virtues that facilitated human interaction:

"Mercy, as I said, is natural to all human beings. Yet is most becomes emperors, finding when among them more to save and greater scope for revealing itself. How tiny is the harm done by the cruelty of private individuals! ..." Furthermore, "... There is, to be sure, a concord among the virtues. Each of them is as good and honourable as the other. Yet one may be more suitable to some people. Greatness of mind befits any mortal, even the poorest - is anything greater or braver than to beat back the force of ill fortune? But this greatness of mind has freer scope in good fortune, and is shown to better effect upon the magistrate's bench than down on the floor. Mercy, whatever house it enters, will make it happy and calm."[68]

Seneca then acknowledged that there are different types of mercy available in human life, pointing to the mercy of saving a life as the highest form of the virtue. The prince who pardoned a man sentenced to execution would surely find that his subject looked upon him with a renewed sense of loyalty. But it was important to note that gratitude alone was not the best source of this loyalty, rather it should stem from the criminal's appreciation for having been given an opportunity to improve himself:

"Savage, inexorable anger is not becoming to a king. He cannot tower much above any person on whose level he has placed himself by growing angry. But if he grants life and dignity to men who have risked and deserve to lose them, he

[68] Ibid., p. 134.

does what none save a man of power can do. ... to save a life is the prerogative of high good fortune, never more admirable than when it attains the same power as the gods, by whose favour we are brought into the light of day, good men and bad alike. So a prince should adopt as his own the attitude of the gods. Some citizens, because they are useful and good, he should look upon with pleasure, others he should leave to make up the number, rejoicing in the existence of some, enduring that of the others."[69]

By drawing an analogy between the king's mercy and that dispensed by the gods, Seneca rather cleverly appealed to Nero's vanity while reminding his pupil that he too may at some time require the mercy of heaven. The gods themselves were the best models of virtue and mercy, and Nero "... should wish to be to the citizens as he would wish the gods to be to him."[70]

On a more politically expedient level, the king who appreciated the subtle operations of mercy on the minds of his subjects provided for his own security. He did this not only by keeping his enemies close in terms of granting mercy to those who challenged him, but by understanding the fact that 'frequent punishment aroused' the anger and resentment of all members of society. Most importantly, however, the ruler who learned to exercise mercy demonstrated a mature ability to restrain emotional excesses:

"True mercy, Caesar, is what you have shown. It is not something that starts with remorse at savagery - it means spotlessness, it means never having to shed a citizen's blood, it means supreme power exercised with the truest self-control, an embracing love for the human race as though for oneself, it means not being corrupted by greed or natural impetuosity or examples set by earlier princes into testing how far one can go against one's fellow-citizens; it means blunting the edge of one's imperial power."[71]

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[69] Ibid., pp. 134-35.
[70] Ibid., pp. 135-36.
[71] Ibid., pp. 142-43.

And finally, the prince who learned how to rule mercifully provided himself with the best tools for guaranteeing social order:

"A prince will establish good morals in a state and cleanse it of its vices by patience - which does not mean that he approves of them, but rather that he is willing, indeed highly distressed, to reach the point of chastisement. Men are inhibited from doing wrong by the very mercifulness of the ruler. Punishment seems far more serious, if decreed by a mild man."[72]

In Book II, Seneca distinguished between the 'definitions and contraries of mercy'. He expanded his argument that mercy was in essence a form of restraint or self-control. He went to considerable lengths to distinguish mercy from pity, which for the Stoics was a weak and 'unmanly' emotion, ill-suited to the more sober and rational impulses that prompted a leader to act mercifully. Again he used a religious analogy to illustrate his point:

"In the same way, then, that religion serves to worship the gods while superstition dishonours them, mercy and gentleness are qualities displayed by all good men, while pity is something they will avoid. The fault of a petty mind succumbing to the sight of evils that affect others, it is a feature very familiar to the worse kind of person. ... Pity looks at the plight, not at the cause of it. Mercy joins in with reason."[73]

Ultimately, Seneca provided Nero with an ideal model of virtuous kingship that was to be distinguished from government by tyranny. A fundamental moral quality was required of a king in order to dispense justice wisely from the earliest

[72] Ibid., p. 154.
[73] Ibid., p. 161.

days of his reign, but this quality was enhanced by time and experience as he learned to wield his authority within complex political and ethical boundaries. In other words, kingship involved a progress towards virtue based upon the choices a ruler made. Mercy, and by extension morality, involved individuals having a freedom of decision in life.

If one extends Seneca's lessons on kingship into a broader social framework, it becomes clear that each individual has a certain decision making power that governs social action and moral behaviour. This decision making power hinted at a certain state of self-sufficiency in moral thought, but as members of society, individuals understood that their ideas and actions had consequences beyond their own lives. If every person had this decision making faculty, then all individuals were capable of moral progress. Therefore Seneca's notion of a progress towards virtue was available across political or social divides, and all right-minded people were capable of degrees of improvement. Seneca's prime directive that virtue cultivated humanity applied to all. Each person was required to live in accordance with nature and right reason, and if they did so, moral progress would follow. Finally, Seneca's notion of moral progress was underscored by Stoic epistemology, which allowed for wisdom to be learned.

vii

Lipsius and Morality in Society

In his moral thought Lipsius acknowledged the Early Stoic model of the wise man as an ideal, but he fully accepted Seneca's notion that man was in a state of

progress towards wisdom. Lipsius considered Seneca's social thought a powerful force for social change, and as such he adopted its central tenets into his political philosophy within the martial framework described earlier. In so doing, Lipsius seemed to create a kind of sub-dialogue in Dutch political thought, which was itself a part of the history of classical virtue.

There were some difficulties in adopting all of Seneca outright. While the tone of Seneca's moral writings seemed to be on the verge of Christianity, which was extremely useful for those who later tried to reconcile Stoic themes with Christian principles, Seneca had little room in his moral system for analysing the roles emotion and sensibility played in determining one's moral character. He was less concerned about the truth of certain ethical propositions than with acting according to right reason. What Seneca did, however, was to make the Stoic man useful to society. Despite the fact that he realized many people had only a minimum degree of altruism and that their decision-making processes were vulnerable,[74] Seneca lent his philosophical authority to notions of progress by encouraging a culture of improvement in civilised societies.

Mark Morford has recently suggested that Lipsius' first formal interest in Seneca probably resulted from conversations he had with Marc-Antoine Muret during Lipsius' early travels in Italy.[75] Lipsius began preparing his first work on Seneca, De Vita acScriptis Annaei Senecae, in 1579 although it was not published until

[74] It is worth noting that Seneca believed most moral decisions were taken based upon probable reasoning rather than certainty. It is also useful to bear in mind that by the seventeenth century, Seneca's reputation was well established as an advocate for *sapientia*, or moral excellence, taught through philosophy which was required of good citizens of all ranks.

1605. By 1580, Morford continues, Lipsius was deeply committed to Stoicism, and within a year of that time the philosopher had singled out Seneca as a 'special source of delight':

"Reading is my only comfort - not only for those more pleasant works, but stronger medicine. Philosophy, I mean - Stoic philosophy - into which I am digging deeply."[76]

It was while preparing a draft of On Constancy that Lipsius' interest in Stoicism shifted almost exclusively to ethics.[77] As we have seen, Lipsius' purpose in the text was to identify private means through which the 'inward malladies of mind' triggered during the Dutch Revolt could be addressed:

"I have just now fashioned these books for the use of my Belgians and as a consolation for my afflicted homeland." And in dedicating the work to Antwerp's civic leaders, "I am the first to level and build this road to Wisdom, ... which alone can lead to Tranquility and Peace." And "From these waters I drink ... that which is useful for my soul. For what use are pedantic points and observations."[78]

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[75] Morford, Mark, Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 157.

[76] Morford quoting Lipsius in ibid., p. 158. Morford notes that Lipsius was reading Seneca, Epictetus and Arrian at this time.

[77] It should be noted here that in early Greek Stoicism, ethics was one of three components that formed the Stoics' system or view of the universe. The Stoic system was divided into logic, physics and ethics, the latter of which guided human behaviour and participation in society. It was the business of ethics to instruct how one lived according to the natural order, through which one could achieve the ultimate ancient Stoic goal: to live autonomously or undisturbed by fortune. The means for achieving this end rested in the cultivation of virtue. Seneca and later Roman Stoics varied in the degrees to which they recommended a supreme detachment from the world to cultivate virtue; hence the evolution of the notion of seeing life as a progress towards virtue.

[78] Morford quoting Lipsius in Morford, Mark, Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius, pp. 159-60. See also note 92 in the same, p. 160: Of the last sentence, Morford suggests, "In the context Lipsius was excusing his avoidance of theological exactness, but his strictures applied equally to philological pedantry."

Following Seneca and the Stoics, Lipsius suggested that the only cures for such maladies of mind were wisdom and constancy: the former resulted from the latter, and the latter was itself a product of right reason used in consonance with the laws of nature.[79] Evil in the world posed a continual threat to constancy, and passions tended to be the most disruptive form of evil both in private and public life. Public affliction, e.g., war, pillaging, etc., was of greater consequence given that it affected a larger number of people in society. Interestingly, one of the primary sources of public evil was an 'intemperate love' of a country or a particular polity. As Copenhaver and Schmitt point out by quoting Lipsius, citizens should focus their minds on a 'higher country':

" '... if we respect the whole nature of man, all these earthlie countries are vaine ... except only in respect of the body, and not of the minde or soule, ... but heaven is our true or rightfull countrey.' Furthermore, '... if there bee a God, there is also a Providence, ... [and thus] a decree and order of thinges, and of that followeth a firme and sure necessitie of events ...; with what axe will you cut off this chaine?' "[80]

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[79] Lipsius' views on constancy appear to have been influenced by Seneca's letter no. 107, which Lipsius had admired. In the letter Seneca discussed the nature of constancy and moral fortitude. See Seneca, Letters from a Stoic (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), pp. 197-99: "Where's that moral insight of yours? Where's that acuteness of perception? ... Does something as trivial as that upset you? ...One has to accept life on the same terms as public baths, or crowds, or travel. Things will get thrown down at you and things will hit you. Life's no soft affair. It's a long road you've started on: you can't but expect to have slips and knocks and falls, and get tired, and openly wish - a lie - for death. ... Let the personality be made ready to face everything; let it be made to realize that it has come to terrain on which thunder and lightning play, ... Everyone faces up more bravely to a thing for which he has long prepared himself, sufferings even, being withstood if they have been trained for in advance. ... And since it is invariably unfamiliarity that makes a thing more formidable than it really is, this habit of continual reflection will ensure that no form of adversity finds you a complete beginner. There are conditions of our existence which we cannot change. What we can do is adopt a noble spirit, such a spirit as befits a good man, so that we may bear up bravely under all that fortune sends us and bring our will into tune with nature's; reversals, after all, are the means by which nature regulates this visible realm of hers: ... after the calm comes the storm; ... day succeeds night; while part of the heavens is in the ascendant, another is sinking. It is by means of opposites that eternity endures. ... One can do nothing better than endure what cannot be cured and attend uncomplainingly the God at whose instance all things come about."

[80] Lipsius, Justus, Two Bookes of Constancie, originally translated by Sir John Stradling, (eds) Kirk, Rudolf and Hall, C.M. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1939) quoted in Copenhaver, Brian and Schmitt, Charles, Renaissance Philosophy, p. 265.

Lipsius' personal belief in a Providential order provided a further area of compatibility between himself and the Stoics, although this compatibility relied upon making certain philosophical alterations or concessions for the sake of emphasizing a common providential foundation for moral life. For example, rather than fate governing the Stoic providential order, Christians had to place God at the head of this system. It was also necessary to secure the position of free will within the providential order, and to allow for a certain contingency to exist between causes and events by God's design. Lipsius address these matters within the traditional framework of dividing motives for action in the world between the realms of first and second causes: first causes were determined by destiny and Providence; freedom and moral decision-making occurred within the realm of second causes.[81]

While Lipsius was criticized for his lack of experience as a theologian by churchmen suspicious of his sympathy with a pagan philosophy, and of the ultimate motives of his Neostoicism, Lipsius reaffirmed his belief in piety, which was in turn linked directly to his understanding of virtue:

"Divide vertue into two branches, Pietie and goodness, Pietie is a right beleefe concerning God, and the true worship of him: For of these two Pietie consisteth, and without the either of them she is lame, and unperfect. We ought then before all things to labour (as much as in us lyeth) to attaine to the knowledge of this supreme godhead, & when we understand what it is, to worship and adore it religiously, and purely. The true light of both is to be seene in holy Scriptures, albeit certaine sparkles, lye scattered here and there in prophane authors, which I

[81] These points are made by Copenhaver and Schmitt.

will gather together; concerning beleefe these which follow; And this beleefe is most necessary, for to deeme well of God is the beginning of Pietie."[82]

By dealing with the nature of virtue, morality and religion in such measured, and admittedly broad terms, Lipsius was setting the tone of his Neostoicism for his readers. This was consistent with his primary purpose to identify a system of morals that had no philosophical or theological extremes. Lipsius continued in this vein throughout On Constancy, with particularly interesting results in the passages that investigated key distinctions between Stoicism and Christianity. In the process of explaining the differences between the respective doctrines of these systems of belief, Lipsius seemed to highlight indirectly the common themes they shared.

Again reading with Morford, Lipsius opened his discussion about the distinguishing features of Christianity with Stoicism by focussing on Providence, fate and necessity, all of which when combined formed the bedrock for constancy. Constancy blended with obedience to Providence formed true liberty. For Lipsius:

"Providence is the directing intelligence of God, ..., and it is the origin of all human experience. Since it is the attribute of God, man must be like a soldier who had taken an oath to obey his commander. Obedience to God, Lipsius concludes, is true liberty: *Dio parere libertas est* ... . The power of providence is shown in necessity, which must lead to the decay and destruction of all temporal things ... . Fate ... follows inexorably from providence and necessity."[83]

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[82] Lipsius, Justus, Sixe Bookes of Politics or Civil Doctrine, p. 2.
[83] Morford, Mark, Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius, p. 164.

Because the Stoics divided fate into categories, Lipsius then clarified the type of fate with which he was concerned through the voice of his narrator, Langius:

"For I define true Fate either ... as the series and order of causes depending on divine wisdom, or ... as the immovable decree of providence fixed in movable things, that sets each thing firmly in its own order, place and time. ... They [the Stoics] subject God to Fate ... but we [Christians] subject Fate to God ... God leads on all human affairs by the force of Fate."[84]

It is through a consideration of the problem of free will that Lipsius tied the various strands of compatibility between his preferred philosophical school and his Christian faith:

"What then, of free will? It exists: God knows what man will choose to do; he has seen it but has not compelled it; he knows it but has not ordered it; he has foretold it but has not foreordained it ... . Thus Stoic doctrine and Christian belief can be reconciled, and the proper relationship of God, fate, and free will is established ..." Furthermore, "... These abstract doctrines are illustrated by concrete similes. Human beings are passengers on the Ship of Fate; they may move upon the decks of the ship, but they cannot impede its course. The 'supreme will' holds the reins and guides the chariot (of fate) wherever he wishes."[85]

By 1600 Lipsius concerned himself almost exclusively with developing his Christian Stoic system of belief. These efforts culminated in the publication of Lipsius' handbooks on Stoicism in 1604: Manuductio, or Digest of Stoic Philosophy, and Physiologia, or Physics of the Stoics. These texts worked from the premise that Stoicism was the best philosophical system to accommodate Christianity for two reasons: Stoicism did not owe philosophical allegiance to any

[84] Lipsius quoted in ibid., pp. 154-65.
[85] Ibid., p. 165.

one particular thinker; and, Stoicism consisted of an eclectic set of principles, which lent themselves to various interpretations without diluting their essential moral value.

In the Physiologia particularly, Lipsius furthered his analysis of compatibility between Christianity and Stoicism by reconsidering the value of studying Stoic ethics within the framework of Stoic physics. His purpose was to re-cast Neostoicism as a type of 'Christianized' natural philosophy by examining further the relationship between fate and Providence. To have delved too deeply into other realms of the Stoic system would have caused him problems as a Christian, particularly given the pantheistic dimensions of the Stoic's original concept of a divine force in the cosmos.

As we know, Stoic physics was the second of three elements into which the Stoic philosophical system was divided. Stoic logic (*logos*), the first of these elements, laid the foundation for understanding the rules through which the universe operated and truth could be determined. Stoic physics displayed the order and structure of the cosmos. Stoic ethics, in turn, guided behaviour within the cosmic order.

The Stoics' view of natural bodies contributed to their understanding of the nature of the cosmos. Following ancient materialist principles, the Stoics believed that everything that was real was a stable material body. Following Aristotle, they also believed in the reality of form. The properties of all bodies were understood through an analysis of their nature as a whole, be the body a

rock, a tree, etc. Since form was real, it was also a body. They associated form with *pneuma*, a very fine breath or wind, a body, that moved between particles of matter keeping them in their assigned position.

When understood at its most complex level, *pneuma* also provided an explanation for behaviour in nature: the growth of living plants and animals, the manner in which human beings exercised their rational faculties, because reason, and indeed the soul, were manifestations of *pneuma*. The complex relationship between form and body came to be viewed like those of a large rational animal, whose various parts acted in unison to define and serve the whole being.

This model extended into the Stoic view of the world and the cosmic order, both of which were thought of intelligent animals with rational souls of their own. Souls were also identified with *pneuma* with the result that material, rational and more ethereal parts of identity, the world and the universe were united through the connective forces of *pneuma*. Finally, *pneuma* also played a teleological role in that bodies and form resulted from intelligent design inherent in *pneuma*. This in turn hinted at a designing force within nature and the cosmic order rather than one acting from outside it. In one sense, the process through which *pneuma* operated in the world assumed divine characteristics, however the Stoics also recognised personal gods.

In Seneca's world-view, Stoic physics and theology were combined. He followed the traditional view of the cosmos with the earth at its center. The

world, nature and human reason were connected through *pneuma*.[86] The Stoic god, the pre-eminent deity Zeus, was physical substance, a 'world-animal', composed of a body and mind that were completely rational. Zeus determined the nature of the universe and all causes and effects at play in life.

In order to avoid sources of philosophical tension that would have detracted from Lipsius' agenda to reinforce connections between Stoicism and Christianity, Lipsius again, in the Physiologia, simply focussed on the Stoic interpretation of God as the divine rational intelligence, whose providential spirit pervades all manner of order and existence. This reaffirmation of the role of Providence, and his continued treatment of fate and reason provided Lipsius' best example of how Christianity and Stoicism. As Morford concludes:

"Fate is the Reason (*ratio*) that governs individual events and entities in the world, descending from and loosely involved in providence. It is the child (*proles*) of providence, the divine Law, as the Stoics defined it. Fate can also be said to be in accordance with nature, to be necessity, yet God's providence is not subject to fate, for it sets fate in motion. Thus the Stoic ideal of fate is compatible with Christian belief, and Lipsius quotes Augustine in support.[87]

Whether or not Lipsius provided a completely accurate or sound reconciliation of Christianity and Stoicism in the Physiologia, the book served Lipsius' purpose to

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[86] See Seneca, Dialogues and Letters, (ed.) Costa, C.D.N. (London: Penguin Classics, 1997), pp. 8-9. In his 'Consolation of Hevia", Seneca brought cosmological elements into a discussion of change and the human mind: "Look at the planets which light up the world: not one is at rest. The sun glides constantly, moving on from place to place, and although it revolves with the universe its motion is nevertheless opposite to that of the firmament itself: ... its motion is everlasting as it journeys from one point to another. All the planets forever move round and pass by: as the constraining law of nature has ordained they are borne from point to point. When through the fixed periods of years they have completed their courses they will start again upon their former circuits. How silly then to imagine that the human mind, which is formed of the same elements as divine beings, objects to movement and change of abode, ..."

[87] Morford, Mark, Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius, p. 170.

encourage his readers to use philosophy to explore and understand the complexities of their political, moral and religious worlds, and to stress that from among the ancient schools, Roman Stoicism provided the Dutch with the best model of moral virtuous citizenship. Furthermore, regardless of religious or philosophical affiliation, all human beings shared an imperative to improve their self-knowledge and their understanding of the world in order to grow in wisdom.

Conclusion

In his concluding comments on Calvin, William Bouwsma quotes Michel de Montaigne who wrote the following of the human condition.

> "In view of the natural instability of our conduct and opinions, it has often seemed to me that even good authors are wrong to insist on fashioning a consistent and solid fabric out of us. They choose one general characteristic and go and arrange and interpret all of a man's actions to fit their picture; and if they cannot twist them enough, they go and set them down to dissimulation."[88]

Bouwsma suggested that Montaigne's appreciation of the 'inconstancy and unpredictability' of individuals, which will be discussed further in chapter two, was particularly significant in the sixteenth century but the problems posed by these tendencies resonated throughout later times. The search for the best available means to gather elements of knowledge and experience into a coherent but not restrictive form was one of the central purposes of the Neostoicism under discussion.

While it is not claimed that Calvin was a Neostoic in the mould of Lipsius, there are a sufficient number of remnants of Stoic thought in Calvin's mature work to suggest that he saw a need to reply to, and on occasion agree with, the spirit of this ancient school, particularly when it could underscore the practical application of faith in society. When Stoicism enhanced Calvin's point that certain forms of worldly activity promoted the general welfare of God's Elect in positive ways, Stoicism was especially useful. Positive worldly activity undertaken in a proper spirit of Christian discipline helped members of the Elect to prove themselves worthy of the sanctification faith offered them. These were ideas that filtered into Scottish society, and profoundly influenced its pre-Enlightenment moral thought.

The Dutch Republic provided a different model of polity to that of Calvin's Geneva. At first the divisive nature of the wars of the Dutch Revolt threatened the stability of the Republic, and it struggled to determine its religious character within the framework of its Republican and commercial identities. As time passed, the Republic's intellectual and political leaders defined a balance of power between religion and the new political and social order that mitigated religion's formal influence in society. The Dutch incorporated their religious preferences with the spirit of Erasmus' legacy of free inquiry to underscore the fundamentally tolerant character of their national identity. Ultimately common commitments to the republican order and commercial success overtook religion as the primary cohesive forces in society.

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[88] Bouwsma, William, J., John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait, p. 230 [Montaigne, Michel de, "De L'inconstance de nos actions," Essays, Book III, pp. 1-2: quote trans. Donald Frame.]

It remained, however, for Dutch intellectuals to define the moral ethos of their society. Leading figures like Grotius, whose contributions are examined in the next chapter, addressed this problem within the context of exploring the political ideologies and concepts of natural law that formed the intellectual core of Dutch republicanism. Grotius' close contemporary, Justus Lipsius, contributed to the intellectual discussion by articulating a form of Neostoicism that advocated the cultivation of Roman Stoic virtues to promote national unity and social harmony. Lipsius turned to Stoic moral philosophy as his guide to form a code of ethics best suited to the new commercial order, drawing particularly from the work of Seneca.

Seneca's appeal rested mainly in the fact that he developed the notion within Stoicism that life should be seen as a progress towards virtue, that the cultivation of virtue was as significant in human life as its actual attainment. Seneca developed a system of ethics based upon inward tranquility and social duty that let itself perfectly to Lipsius' Neostoic paradigm. Furthermore, in its belief in forces of providence governing the world, Senecan Stoicism lent itself more easily to Christian principles than did other ancient schools of philosophy.

Ultimately Lipsian Neostoicism sought to identify a kind of Christian natural philosophy, which this chapter calls Christian Stoicism, to define the character of the citizenry. This Christian Stoicism was tolerant of various religious sects, and encouraged intellectual freedom, but it demanded obedience from all citizens to the established political order. Like the Stoics, Lipsius believed that virtue carried commitments that implied that citizens had to live decent moral lives in

society. Civic duties and moral imperatives were combined for the public good. While Lipsius cannot be credited with having a direct influence on the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, it seems that some of the Enlightenment literati came into contact with his work. Copies of Lipsius' translations and commentaries on Seneca were held at the Faculty of Advocates Library in Edinburgh, and they could also be found in some of the literati's personal libraries.[89] Lipsius' reliance upon the Stoics, and indeed his endorsement of life being seen as a progress towards virtue, emphasized the practical value of philosophy which found favour in Enlightenment Scotland. As Adam Smith wrote:

"The Stoics in general seem to have admitted that there might be a degree of proficiency in those who had not advanced to perfect virtue and happiness. They distributed those proficients into difference classes, according to the degree of their advancement; and they called the imperfect virtues which they supposed them capable ..., proprieties, fitness, decent and becoming actions, for which a plausible or probably reason could be assigned, what Cicero expresses by the Latin word *officia*, and Seneca, I think more exactly, by that of *convenientia*. The doctrine of those imperfect, but attainable virtues, seems to have constituted what we may call the practical morality of the Stoics."[90]

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[89] Lipsius' edition of Seneca, Phil. Opera (Antwerp, 1652) appears in the sales catalogue of Hugh Blair's library. The Advocates Library in Edinburgh also held a number of Lipsius editions, including a French edition of his, *Six livres des politique ou doctrine civile* (Rochelle, 1590); and his editions of Seneca. [See A Catalogue of the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, Vol. I. (Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas, Walter, and Thomas Ruddiman, 1742), pp. 340-41.]

[90] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982), pp. 291-92.

Chapter 2

Aspects of Neostocism in the Seventeenth Century

Introduction

During the Middle Ages, the influence of the Stoic doctrines was restricted to a large degree to debates of social and political significance. The rediscovery of Greek and Roman antiquity during the Renaissance provided a basis for exploring Stoic epistemology, logic and metaphysics. In chapter one it was noted that during the sixteenth century intellectual interest in Stoicism broadened to include deeper analysis of its compatibility with Christian principles. The Protestant Reformation view of Stoicism as illustrated in the works of John Calvin was deeply complex, but he retained a belief in the fundamental utility of the tenets of the ancient school despite challenges it posed to his faith.

It was also argued that Justus Lipsius was among the first early modern Continental philosophers who successfully articulated a form of Neostoicism, or Christian Stoicism, that amalgamated Stoic ethics and moral philosophy with Christianity. In so doing, Lipsius provided his readers with a formula for encouraging virtue, order and harmony in society. This formula was sorely needed to assuage feelings of deep insecurity in the aftermath of the Dutch Republic's religious wars, and to bolster failing confidence in established

institutions to provide a viable ideological framework for the re-establishment of order in Dutch society. In short, Lipsius sought to recast Stoicism for his era, and to the extent that he inspired contemporaries and later generations of scholars to examine Stoic philosophy anew, he may be credited with paving the way for the dissemination of a Neostoicism that reconciled matters of faith, duty and civil obedience effectively.

During the seventeenth century, the debate on Neostoicism widened and spread throughout European intellectual circles. Exploration of Stoicism occurred against a backdrop of growing interest in modern science and the rediscovery of scepticism. Stoicism continued to invite careful analysis as a range of thinkers on the Continent and in Great Britain expanded investigation into the relationship between the separate branches of Greek and Roman philosophy, science and the Christian religion. The authority which Lipsius believed ancient Stoicism lent his deliberations was challenged by followers of the Cartesian revolution that derived its spirit from another philosophical source, Pyrrhonian scepticism.

Philosophers who stood at a junction between the Christian and secular worlds, thinkers such as Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626), endorsed the advancement of scientific methods in that they strengthened man's inductive capacities. However the power of reason had its limitations, and at times for some the boundary continued to be drawn where matters of personal faith began. One might also contrast Montaigne and Bacon with Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655), who revived Epicureanism and attempted to reconcile Christian

belief in free will and an infinite God with atomism, or mechanistic explorations of nature.

It was, then, a complicated society that emerged in Europe after 1600, and its philosophical scene was dominated by tensions between sceptics, Stoics and Epicureans, as well as by discussion over the appropriate degrees to which one should rely on reason, faith or both. This chapter seeks to provide a general view of an ongoing discourse on Neostoicism that was part of the broad spectrum of seventeenth-century intellectual life. It seeks to do so by examining materials from selected individuals who were traditionally favourable to Neostoicism, as well as some whose legacy though influential may be more ambiguous.

The chapter opens by recalling that neither Calvin nor Lipsius conducted their deliberations on Stoicism in isolation. Lipsius and Montaigne were contemporaries and their colleague, Guillaume du Vair (1556-1621), made singular contributions to the dissemination of Neostoicism in France. Du Vair's protegé, François de Malherbe (1550-1628), and his student, François Maynard (1582/3-1646), fostered further interest in Neostoicism among the French literary classes. From among their ranks arose the Moralistes,[91] who adopted Neostoic treatments of virtue and morality and whose works were cited by Adam Smith and his fellow Scottish literati.

[91] General references to Moralistes in this chapter will be followed by a more detailed discussion of their influence on the Scots in chapter 3, with special reference to work of Jean de La Bruyère (1639-96).

The chapter then considers Neostoic discourse in Great Britain as it appeared in the thought of the dramatist, Ben Jonson (1572-1637), whose Neostoicism was rooted in an abiding interest in Seneca and Lipsius. Neostoicism also filtered into thriving debates about natural law, the rise of absolutism, and interpretations of duty and rights that were of particular concern to Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94), whose works were widely read in eighteenth-century Scotland, reworked theories of natural law to explore the nature of authority, the relationship between autonomy and responsibility, and the intellect and morality. They followed Lipsian Neostoicism in emphasizing the need to teach individuals tenets of virtuous citizenship by invoking themes of constancy and self-discipline underscored by Christian duty.

The chapter closes by suggesting that the Neostoic discourse it describes was widely known; that eighteenth-century Scottish intellectuals were (or were bound to be) well aware of it; and, that this discourse anticipated many of the Scots' questions about ethics, virtue and human action.

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An Ambiguous Legacy: Michel de Montaigne

Like Lipsius, Michel de Montaigne followed in the Renaissance humanist tradition. He was trained in Latin, Greek and law, and he developed a reverence for the writings of Seneca, Sextus Empiricus and Plutarch early in life.[92] In his

[92] Part of Montaigne's early education was at the Collège de Guyenne in Bordeaux. While there, Montaigne was a pupil of George Buchanan (1506-82), the prominent Scottish humanist and man

moral thought, Montaigne questioned what people could learn about how to live decently. He asked the question deliberately; he sought specific answers resulting from rational thought processes. He used an innovative new form, the essay, to describe the conclusions he reached. His writings laid an important foundation for subsequent debate among moral theorists about the extent to which individuals were genuinely capable of governing their actions.

For our purposes, it is Montaigne as a transitional figure between the Renaissance humanism of the sixteenth century and the rational/scientific era of the seventeenth century that is of interest. Specifically, the brief interpretation of Montaigne that follows seeks to highlight dualities in his thought that foreshadow philosophical tensions confronted by later generations of European thinkers, including Scots in the eighteenth century. He was at various stages of his career a Stoic, a supreme sceptic, and an Epicurean. He criticized religion harshly, yet he remained a Catholic who followed Church doctrine in matters of personal faith.[93] As an essayist, Montaigne's contribution to a burgeoning French literary tradition increasingly preoccupied with the moral nature of man is also significant. His essays were accessible and provocative.

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of letters, who promoted the cause of the Reformation and classical education in Scotland. Buchanan was noted for his translations into Latin of Euripides' *Medea* and *Alcestis*, and for his original dramas such as *Baptistes* (1534) attacking tyranny. Buchanan returned to Scotland in 1561 and became involved in intellectual and political life. Although he initially supported Mary, Queen of Scots, he later denounced her (primarily on religious grounds), and he assisted in the preparation of the case against Mary that led to her execution. Buchanan served as tutor to Mary's son, King James VI and I. His most important political tract, *De jure regni apud Scotos* (1579), defended the principle of limited monarchy.

[93] In this assessment, I follow J.B. Schneewind.

Despite the fact that this scepticism overtook earlier Stoic sympathies, Montaigne's knowledge of Stoic themes contributed to ongoing debate about character, behaviour and knowledge. In a sense, Montaigne broadened the context in which Neostoicism was understood by highlighting the categories into which the ideas of his time were divided. Throughout his intellectual development, Montaigne remained preoccupied by inconstancies in human life. He seemed to find permanent solace in a Stoic-like acceptance of, or resignation to, the limitations of humanity.

Montaigne's Essays were first published in two books in 1580 (a final Book III was completed in 1588), and the author made frequent revisions to his work. The Essays chronicle Montaigne's "evolution" from Stoic to sceptic to Epicurean. They ask how we should live and what individuals should live for. Scholars are divided as to whether or not this evolution is indicative of genuine changes in Montaigne's thought. Some suggest that the "evolution" may have been a rhetorical device to challenge his readers.[94] Other suggest it is ultimately impossible to categorize this French thinker.[95]

Whether or not Montaigne hid his true philosophical identity from his readers, he seemed content to tolerate dualities or perceived contradictions in his thought. It may be that these dualities were necessary results of continually reassessing his philosophical beliefs. What does seem evident is that these dualities testified to

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[94] Schaefer, D.L. "Montaigne's intention and his rhetoric," *Interpretation: a Journal of Political Philosophy* 5 (1975), pp. 57-90.
[95] Mackenney, Richard, Sixteenth Century Europe: Expansion and Conflict (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 119.

the elusivity of a unifying philosophical theory to encompass all the concerns of the early modern age.[96] Some of the more dramatic illustrations of these dualities appear in his essays, the "Apology for Raymond Sebond" and "Of Repentance." In the "Apology for Raymond Sebond," which was published in Book Two of the Essays, Montaigne appeared to be going through a sceptical crisis. He argued against the attainability of certain knowledge; he refuted Stoicism; he acknowledged the logical (reasonable) nature of Pyrrhonian scepticism.

"Finally, there is no existence that is constant, either of our being or of that of objects. And we, and our judgment, and all mortal things go on flowing and rolling unceasingly. Thus nothing certain can be established about one thing by another, both the judging and the judged being in continual change and motion. We have no communication with being, because every human nature is always midway between birth and death, offering only a dim semblance and shadow of itself, and an uncertain and feeble opinion."[97]

The one certain entity, Montaigne continued, is God. He supported his conclusion with a reference to Seneca on a similar theme, but the reference itself was tempered by criticism of Seneca's paganism.

"Thus, all things being subject to pass from one change to another, reason, seeking a real stability in them, is baffled, being unable to apprehend anything stable and permanent; ... we must conclude that God alone is - not at all according to any measure of time, but according to an eternity immutable and immobile, not measured by time or subject to any decline; before whom there is nothing, nor will there be after, no is there anything more new or more recent; but one who really is - who by one single *now* fills *ever*; and there is nothing that really is but he alone - nor can we say 'He has been,' or 'He will be' - without beginning and without end. To this most religious conclusion of a pagan[98] I want to add only this remark of a witness of the same condition, for an ending to this

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[96] In their own day eighteenth-century Scots grappled with similarly vexing challenges, and they looked to their seventeenth-century (and ancient) predecessors for guidance.
[97] Montaigne, Michel de, "Apology for Raymond Sebond," in J.B. Schneewind, Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 44.
[98] Seneca.

long and boring discourse, which would give me material without end: 'O what a vile and abject this is man,' he says, 'if he does not raise himself above humanity!' That is a good statement and a useful desire, but equally absurd."

Man cannot

"... raise himself above himself and humanity; for he can see only with his own eyes, and seize only with his own grasp. He will rise, if God by exception lends him a hand; he will rise by abandoning and renouncing his own means, and letting himself be raised and uplifted by purely celestial means. It is for our Christian faith, not for his Stoical virtue, to aspire to that divine and miraculous metamorphosis."[99]

In his scepticism, Montaigne stated the case for how much human nature can accomplish without God. If he truly remained a Catholic in his private mind, it is not clear how he reconciled his faith with his scepticism except to assume that for himself, he did not associate philosophical preferences with spiritual needs. He was tolerant of the vicissitudes of human nature and thought, and it may be that this toleration extended to an obvious disconnect between mind and spirit (heart). By the time Book III of the Essays appeared ten years after the first two, the direction of Montaigne's thought seemed to alter again. He displayed un-Pyrrhonic views by appealing to experience 'when reason fails us.' An overriding imperative to search for truth now seemed to transcend philosophical preference.

The essay, "Of Repentance," was included in Book III. It provides a vivid illustration of the difficulty of processing and revising thought on a continual basis:

[99] Montaigne, Michel de, "Apology for Raymond Sebond," in J.B. Schneewind, Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant, p. 45.

"I cannot keep my subject still. It goes along befuddled and staggering, with a natural drunkenness. I take it in this condition, just as it is at the moment I gave my attention to it. ... My history needs to be adapted to the moment. I may presently change, not only by chance, but also by intention. This is a record of various and changeable occurrences, and of irresolute and, when it so befalls, contradictory ideas: ... ."[100]

In sceptical fashion, he then distinguishes between truth as he understands it and truth as it is:

"So, all in all, I may indeed contradict myself now and then; but truth, as Demades said, I do not contradict. If my mind could gain a firm footing, I would not make essays, I would make decisions; but it is always in apprenticeship and on trial. I set forth a humble and inglorious life; that does not matter. You can tie up all moral philosophy and with a common and private life just as well as with a life of richer stuff. Each man bears the entire form of a man's estate."[101]

Ultimately Montaigne referred to his own experience as his sole reliable guide to reflection and knowledge. He excuses himself for the 'immodesty' of the habit:

"Let me here excuse what I often say, that I rarely repent and that my conscience is content with itself - not the conscience of an angel or a horse, but as the conscience of a man; always adding this refrain, not perfunctorily but in sincere and complete submission: that I speak as an ignorant inquirer, referring the decision purely and simply to the common and authorized beliefs. I do not teach, I tell."[102]

Montaigne then comments on virtue and vice, the offensive nature of malice, and the fact that both virtues (recommended by the ancients) and vices (recognised for their destructiveness) are comprehended by reason, nature and public opinion.

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[100] Montaigne, Michel de, "Of Repentance," in J.B. Schneewind, Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant, p. 45.
[101] Ibid.

He puts little store in opinion in that it is easily swayed by corruption or ignorance. However he points out that if opinion is 'authorized by laws and customs', its influence on human conduct is powerful. The most reliable guide to conduct is to develop a degree of constancy in thought that forms the standard by which behavior is judged, and here we find hints of Stoicism reflected in the tone of the essay:

"Those of us especially who live a private life that is on display only to ourselves must have a pattern established within us by which to test our actions, and according to this pattern, now pat ourselves on the back, now punish ourselves. I have my own laws and court to judge me, and I address myself to them more than anywhere else. To be sure, I restrain my actions according to others, but I extend them only according to myself. ... You must use your own judgment .... With regard to virtues and vices, your own conscience has great weight: take that away, and everything falls [Cicero]."[103]

Montaigne points further to the value of the soul, and to the difficult but ultimately desirable task of maintaining Stoic-like discipline as individuals attempt to correct imperfections in thought and deed:

"The value of the soul consists not in flying high, but in an orderly pace. Its greatness is exercised not in greatness, but in mediocrity. As those who judge and touch us inwardly make little account of the brilliance of our public acts, and see that these are only thin streams and jets of water spurting from a bottom otherwise muddy and thick; so likewise those who judge us by this brave outward appearance draw similar conclusions about our inner constitution, and cannot associate common faculties."[104]

There are distinct features of Montaigne's thought that separate him from Lipsius and the formal Neostoic tradition, most obviously Montaigne's scepticism. Yet

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[102] Ibid., p. 46.
[103] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

the appeal to individual responsibility and self-discipline that forms a steady undercurrent in Montaigne's thought mirrors the Neostoic concern for order within the self and society. If one of the over-riding impressions of Montaigne's thought is one of flux, the need to define certain permanent features of mind even at the most basic level becomes important in assessing Montaigne's legacy. For this, we turn to a final essay, "Of Experience," that appeared at the end of Book III.

In this essay Montaigne writes of God, religion and philosophy, and continues to reflect, if unintentionally, positive Stoic themes:

> "As for me, then, I love life and cultivate it just as God has been pleased to grant it to us. *The wise man is the keenest searcher for natural treasures* [Seneca]. ... I accept with all my heart and gratitude what nature has done for me, and I am pleased with myself and proud of myself that I do. We wrong that great and all-powerful Giver by refusing his gifts. ... Himself all good, he has made all things good. ... Of opinions of philosophy I most gladly embrace those that are most solid, that is to say most human and most our own; my opinions, in conformity with my conduct, are low and humble. ... It is an absolute perfection and virtually divine to know how to enjoy our being rightfully. The most beautiful lives, to my mind, are those that conform to the common human pattern, with order, but without miracle and without eccentricity."[105]

There are elements in Montaigne that set him apart from Lipsius. His scepticism called for a complete reliance on the powers of reason, which in turn, led to the fundamental and difficult epistemological question of how humans can know how to act morally. For Lipsius, compliance with order and duty included a moral imperative that did not alter over time. Montaigne's insistence on a

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[104] Ibid., p. 49.
[105] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

continual reassessment of the human condition was indicative of the sceptical notion that perhaps truth may never be found.

"Since a wise man can be mistaken, and a hundred men, and many nations, yes, and human nature according to us is mistaken for many centuries about this or that, what assurance have we that sometimes it stops being mistaken, and that in this century it is not making a mistake."[106]

Montaigne's criticism of Stoicism often seemed to rest in the fact that it encouraged the possibility of attaining an unattainable ideal: perfect virtue, supreme constancy, resolute self-command. There may have been moments when Stoic cosmology or theology seemed alarmingly irrational, and bridges could not be built between aspects of Stoic thought and seventeenth-century science. And yet Montaigne never renounced the positive aspects of Stoicism that encouraged self-reliance and intellectual reflection.

Following Socrates, Montaigne believed that human beings had the capacity within themselves to develop orderly lives free of outside assistance, and by extension establish the decent society all individuals sought. At a time when Calvin and other Protestant thinkers offered low estimate of human abilities, Montaigne and his peers pressed the boundaries of received moral and philosophical thinking. In so doing, he set in play a search for truth that transcended philosophical preferences and customs that had profound influences in the seventeenth century.

Guillaume Du Vair: A Model French Neostoic

The religious and political tensions that preoccupied Lipsius during the 1580s and 1590s in Flanders were shared by his contemporary, Guillaume du Vair, who became the leading exponent of Neostoicism in France during the same era. While Spaniards, Englishmen, Flemish and French battled in the Netherlands, du Vair was deeply troubled by profound religious, political and social strife that plagued France during its civil wars between Catholics and Huguenots. Like Lipsius, du Vair found a remedy for social division in an appeal to Christianized Neostoicism that promised a return to order in French society, if not national harmony.

Little is known about du Vair's youth, though he appears to have received a classical education and he toured Italy before establishing a successful law practice in Aix-en-Provence. Du Vair rose to prominence in the provincial government and throughout his life held various positions at the court of Henry IV. He was created a bishop in 1603.

In his first published work, Sainte philosophie (1584), du Vair reflected on the nature of life and identity. He combined Stoic and Christian themes, appealing for a restoration of order and civility across society in a language that was familiar to and popular with his readers. Du Vair next translated The Manual, or

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[106] Montaigne, Michel de, "Apology for Raymond Sebond," in J.B. Schneewind, Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant, p. 41.

Encheiridion, of Epictetus, which was followed by the publication of du Vair's own restatement of Epictetus' thought under the title Philosophie morale des Stoiques (The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics), and in 1593 by a treatise De la constance et consolation es calamites publiques.[107] Of these works, The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics appears to have been the most widely read by those who would take up Neostoicism in the seventeenth century, particularly François de Malherbe and members of the Moraliste school.

Given his focus on Epictetus, it is not surprising that the spirit of du Vair's Neostocism drew almost completely from this Stoic father. There is little evidence to suggest that du Vair ever found a need to test Epictetan thought against other forms of Stoicism or scepticism. Du Vair urged his readers as Epictetus did to follow nature, to concern themselves only with those matters directly under their control in daily life, and to live according to the dictates of reason. Du Vair accepted the Stoic notion that reason is the highest facet of human identity, and that its successful employment in daily life led to the propagation of virtue.

Twentieth-century moral philosophers such as J.B. Schneewind have noted that du Vair was not generally interested in providing rigourous philosophical analysis of the Stoic principles he admired. In this he anticipated a similar tendency among the Moralistes, and among some eighteenth-century Scots, whose fundamental interest in Stoicism rested in the ease with which it could be

[107] The latter text was translated into English by A. Buckler under the title Against Adversitie in 1622.

applied to practical Christian life rather than in proving its validity through formal argumentation. Those interested in the Christian Stoicism of Lipsius and du Vair asked how their ideas could be used to teach individuals to act virtuously, thereby assuring decency and order in society. This question was expanded during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to ask how individual citizens, members of society, could become responsible moral agents.

In The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics, du Vair concerned himself with the identification of the character of the model Neostoic person. Like Montaigne, due Vair began with the fundamental question: what should men do with the gifts bestowed them by nature? What are the purposes and ends of life? He wrote:

"What then ought man to do, whom nature, have endowed with sense," and "hath given the benefit of discourse and reason, to be able to discern and choose the best things of all things which present themselves unto his consideration, and that which is most fit and proper to his use? May we not safely conclude that man also has his end, as well as all other creatures; which is set before him as the furthermost mark and butt, whereto all his actions should be directed: and since the happiness of all things in their perfection, ... shall not the happiness and felicity of man consist in the full obtaining and attaining unto that which is proposed unto him, and whereunto all his actions are to be referred?"[108]

If the purpose of life is to attain happiness through a disciplined ethical life, the end was to attain 'good':

"Now the end of man and of all his thoughts and meditations is good. And truly, there is not one among many, so diverse in nature and condition of life which

[108] Du Vair, Guillaume, The Moral Philosophy of the Stoics, in J.B. Schneewind, Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant, p. 202.

desireth not that which is good, and escheweth not that which is evil: and being demanded wherefore he does this or that, answereth not, but that he doth it or thinks that he doth it for his good and welfare. And albeit in our actions a man may find a great many more bad than good; yet the general intention whereby we are directed and guided is to come unto that which is good."[109]

The attainment of good was by no means straightforward, du Vair warned. Nature is riddled with temptation and any virtuous impulses that help one identify a righteous path had to be strengthened through constancy:

"Good ... is not so placed that all the world may see and perceive it; nature has sowed and scattered here beneath amongst us certain weak and feeble sparklings of that heat, which notwithstanding being rightly applied unto our minds, are able to kindle a pure light in them, and cause us to see good as it is and not as it seems. So then, we must seek it, and we shall find it; and having found it, we must acknowledge it; acknowledging it, we cannot choose but love it; and loving it, we shall fasten all our desires thereunto, ... For even as truth presenting itself unto our understanding is there entertained with great joy and contentedness: even so good offering itself unto our will, is received by her with great pleasure, as being her natural object."[110]

Virtue lay at the heart of du Vair's Neostoicism, as it did for Lipsius and the Roman Stoics. Virtue sprang from and rested upon a foundation of reason, which was itself sustained by constancy and respect for nature.

"Now by the rules of nature, man should be so composed and fashioned that that which is most excellent in him should bear rule and command, and that reason should use all that which is presented unto her as best beseemeth her, and shall most serve for her purpose. Well then, the good and happiness of man consists in the right use of reason, and what is that but virtue, which is nothing else but a constant disposition of will to follow that which is honest and convenient. There is no man, as I suppose, but will avow this to be good: but yet for all that there will be a great many found out which will affirm that herein only consisteth not man's good and happiness, but that he must have a sound and well disposed

[109] Ibid., pp. 202-3.
[110] Ibid., p. 203.

body, and a hundred more commodities, without the which it is not possible for man's life to be, much less to be happy and fortunate."[111]

Du Vair's comments on commodities are interesting in their implications. If the end of everything a man does is his good, and good his end, du Vair argues that one may 'justly say' that health, wealth and property are positive things for they facilitate the attainment of non-material good in society. Taken further, material possessions do no necessarily detract attention from more profound concerns, but enhance one's ability to be a productive member of society. For those who do not enjoy material wealth, the lack thereof can also contribute to the attainment of virtue:

"For virtue, which we have proved before to be the true good, is of such a nature that she can make benefit indifferently of things contrary in nature; she profits and helps her self as well by poverty as by riches, by sickness as by health. For we do as much commend him that can patiently endure his poverty, and constantly bear his griefs of disease, as we do him that liberally bestoweth his goods, and being in health, honestly laboureth in his vocation. Wherefore, let all these things remain indifferent, as being made good or evil by the mind of man which knoweth how to use them rightly, which if he want, yet will he not want the means of attaining unto his end, which is to be fashioned and framed rightly according unto reason, and to make use and benefit of all things which shall happen what soever, and consequently to purchase his chief good and felicity."[112]

This positive assessment of ties between the cultivation of virtue and material possession is one eighteenth-century Scots would have welcomed as they defended the possibility of virtue existing in commercial society.

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., p. 204.

Numerous other parallels appear in de Vair's text that mirror Neostoic themes that filtered into subsequent English and later Scottish treatments of morality and ethics. Du Vair recommended purging passions, maintaining patience in times of trial, to understand that philosophy teaches the right use of wisdom but not the essence of truth, which has its origins in the Divine. Du Vair discussed the role of human will in the attainment of good, that human beings must actively seek good without over-reaching their natural talents. Crossing a boundary between his Stoic impulses and Christianity, however, du Vair warned readers to assert 'positive will' in their search for virtue, to make a conscious choice to follow a virtuous path rather than follow the dictates of fortune. To follow fortune, du Vair wrote, demeaned the power of the Divine:

"Will (as we say) is that which seeketh after our good: now a ruled and well governed will never coveteth (as indeed it ought not to) but that which she may, and which it is in her power to procure. ... Will you then rather choose to run into Fortune, and wait at her deceitful hands for that good which you may give yourself if you will? For this is a divine and inviolable law, which hath been made since the beginning of the world, that if we will have any good, we must purchase and get it our selves, by our own good labour and industry. For nature hath provided a rich storehouse of all good things, and inclosed it in our minds: let us then but stretch forth the hands of our will. For if the will of man be well guided and ordered, it will turn all things to her good."[113]

The final element of du Vair's Neostoicism that seems particularly relevant in terms of later Scottish discussion of Christian Stoicism concerns the notion of progress. Following Seneca, du Vair and Lipsius acknowledged the benefits of viewing life as a progress toward virtue, and they affirmed that it was possible to achieve degrees of virtue even if an idealized form of classical aristocratic virtue

[113] Ibid., p. 205.

was essentially out of reach. The achievement of the Stoic ideal consisted in the perfection of individual human nature, and the 'fashioning of will' toward this end. Du Vair argued that a disposition toward virtue was "wholly in our power, and consequently our good and evil."[114]

Although less widely known than Justus Lipsius, we begin to see that du Vair's own brand of Christian Stoicism or Neostoicism was identical in spirit and intention to that of his Flemish colleague. Their mutual assumption that Christian morality could find support in the writings of Stoic philosophers, and in the minds of reasonable men in their own era, provided a basis for articulating a philosophy that permitted reconciliation after times of war and individual improvement.

iii

A Brief Sketch of French Classicism:

François de Malherbe and his Followers

François de Malherbe is traditionally known in the history of French literature as the father of French classicism, whose works reflected the preferences of a new generation of poets and dramatists, who reinterpreted the meaning and purposes of their craft to emphasize clear and accessible language over stylized forms of writing favoured by the Renaissance tradition. Like their counterparts interested in politics or philosophy, seventeenth-century French literary figures were seeped in the legacy of humanism. They grappled as Montaigne did with defining the

[114] Ibid., p. 209.

meaning of life. They were deeply aware of the power of the written word to convey political or moral messages. They questioned received notions on matters of literary style, grammatical form and the utility of rhetoric.

Like Montaigne, Malherbe stood at a junction in French literary history. He was a theoretician, who insisted on the strict use of form and purity of diction in his writing. He sought refinement in literature, but not at the expense of clarity. The most interesting examples of his prose writings consist of translations of Seneca[115] and Livy, as well as extensive correspondence.

French Renaissance literature was characterised by traditional poetic forms such as the ballade, courtly song or comedy. The introduction of the essay by Montaigne was accompanied by popularization of other literary genres, including the writing of historical treatises, cultural commentaries and religious tracts. Jean Bodin's Methodus ad Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem (1566; Method for the Easy Comprehension History) explored historical method and criticism. More significantly, Bodin emphasized the reading of history over its writing, shifting the classical notion of historical writing as an essentially aesthetic exercise to a more utilitarian one.

Malherbe shared this interest in the pragmatic. Although his first poem, "Les Larmes de Saint Pierre" (1587), followed in the Renaissance courtly fashion, his subsequent works showed a growing interest in defining a new genre of

[115] See Seneca, Les oevvres (A Paris, Chez Charles Chappellain, M.DC.XXXI) traduction de monsieur François de Malherbe.

accessible poetry that was free from overly elaborate language or style. It is suggested that this preference for the orderly and practical was rooted in Malherbe's early exposure to Neostoic themes at the hands of his friend and mentor, Guillaume du Vair.

After completing studies at the universities of Basel (1571) and Heidelberg (1573), Malherbe moved to Provence in 1577 to serve as secretary to the local governor in Aix, where du Vair practised law. A firm friendship seems to have been established for by 1605, du Vair (and a Cardinal Duperron) arranged for Malherbe to travel to Paris in hopes of gaining a position as court poet to Henry IV. Their optimism for success was bolstered by the fact that an ode Malherbe had published in 1600 to Henry's new queen, Marie de Médicis, was very well received. Malherbe was given his appointment.

With some security established, Malherbe's reputation grew among a select group of followers, of whom François Maynard is best known. Maynard was appointed to the household of Marguerite de Valois in 1605, and from there specialized in writing pastoral poems. He was occasionally a civil servant at the court of Aurillac between 1611 and 1628, and was appointed to the Academie Française in 1634. Maynard shared Malherbe's concern for clarity in language, and he endorsed Malherbe's call for the production of a standard grammar to be used across France.

While neither Malherbe or Maynard published widely, their mutual efforts to convey simple concepts about life and duty to their readers became a hallmark of

French literature. We will see in chapter three that la Bruyère and the Moralistes followed Malherbe and his school in their view of literature as the voice of universal truths that sustain individuals during times of joy or personal trial. The call for a universal grammar reflected recognition that language was a unifying force in society that transcended social divisions or regional loyalties. Furthermore, the kind of exemplary writing that Malherbe and his followers were involved in fostered pride in a national literary tradition that affirmed new moral and political opinion. The perpetuation of this national pride became the focal point of the Academie's efforts, and provided a cultural model that Enlightenment Scots may have wished to emulate.

iv

Neostoicism and Ben Jonson

Traditionally the theatre provided particularly fertile ground for the dissemination of ideas in both France and England, as it had in the ancient world. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, theatres in England provided an efficient forum for social and political commentary, as well as a means for propagating loyalty to established political orders and the person of the monarch. The playwrights and poets of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, including William Shakespeare (1564-93), Ben Jonson (1572-1637) and John "Resolute" Ford[116] (1586-ca. 1640), constitute a golden age in literature. They were

[116] For a thorough discussion of John Ford's contribution to Neostoicism in seventeenth-century England, see Barbour, Reid, English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), pp. 112-144.

particularly adept at testing the strength of received moral and ethical principles, and demand for their works increased from the 1570s as urban populations grew.

Shakespeare tends to overshadow his contemporaries in the modern mind. However Ben Jonson is generally regarded as the second most important poet and playwright of his time. His major plays, Every Man in His Humour (1598); Sejanus (1603); Volpone (1606); The Alchemist (1610); and Bartholomew Fair (1614), were well known to theatre-goers of all ranks in society. He wrote several masques before 1625, when his sometimes patron, King James VI and I, died. He was an actor and a critic, who enjoyed a wide following in the theatre world and whose followers came to be known as "the tribe," "the sons of Ben," or more formally, the Cavalier poets.

Little is known about Jonson's earliest years. His father appears to have been a property owner of modest rank, who lost his estates during the reign of Queen Mary I. The elder Jonson was imprisoned and died two months before Ben was born. Jonson's mother remarried a bricklayer, but the generosity of an unknown benefactor enabled the boy to attend the prestigious Westminster School. Although Jonson did not complete the full course of studies at Westminster, the combination of some years of high quality education and exposure to the scions of prominent families fostered Jonson's admiration for Stoic notions of virtuous kingship and duty, as well as a keen sense of political power and social position. It is likely that Jonson's life-long admiration of Seneca dated from this period,

which underscored a fundamental belief in an orderly society sustained by public-spirited aristocrats.[117]

Jonson followed his step-father briefly into the brick trade, but he left for a period of service with English forces in the Netherlands. By 1597 Jonson had returned to England and was writing plays for a prominent producer, Philip Henslowe. When the Lord Chamberlain's theatre company accepted *Every Man in His Humour* for a performance with Shakespeare in the cast in 1598, Jonson started to find the wider recognition he sought. While it is not necessary to dwell further on the minutiae of Jonson's personal life, it is important to note that his successes were tainted by personal tragedies that may have contributed to a deeper need to find peace in a Stoic-like resignation to fate and the foibles of his own character.

In 1598 he killed a fellow dramatist in a duel, for which he was given a prison sentence and was branded. Two of Jonson's sons died in childhood. Immediately before writing *Sejanus*, which chronicled the relationship between a patron and client who assist in the destruction of each other's enemies,[118] Jonson abandoned his family in order to accept a position with a new patron in the north of England. The picture that emerges of Jonson is one of a complex and sometimes morose character, who was as ambitious as he was a learned observer of the human scene. He remained productive despite misfortune, and he appears

[117] See Riggs, David, Ben Jonson: A Life (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 9-22.
[118] Daniel Boughner has noted that Sejanus is Jonson's play that relies most directly on Tacitus, and indeed on Lipsius, in its tone and style. See Boughner, "Jonson's Use of Lipsius in Sejanus," *Modern Language Notes* 73 (1958), pp. 247-55.

to have inspired a considerable degree of affection from a widespread acquaintance despite occasional brutish behaviour.[119]

However difficult a character Jonson may have been, his intellectual interests remained strongly informed by ideals of inner self-constancy, respect for authority and patronage, and a civilised reasonableness, much of which derived from Seneca. Jonson was a didactic poet, who ultimately believed in the power of a benevolent prince to secure social harmony. He believed, despite his personal failings, that a good poet should be a good man, and that poetic verse should propagate responsibility in society. That Jonson's works are permeated with allusions to Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, Juvenal and Seneca testifies to his reverence for classical sources. However the most telling evidence of Jonson's direct interest in Neostoicism rather than the ancients comes in the form of markings and marginalia he made in his personal copy of Lipsius' Six Books of Politics of Civil Doctrine,[120] which has been explored thoroughly in a recent study by Robert C. Evans.[121] Evans notes that the influence of Lipsius on Ben

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[119] One of Jonson's circle, William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649), was the first notable Scottish poet to write deliberately in English. Drummond succeeded his father as laird of Hawthornden in 1610, and Jonson paid a three-week visit to Drummond's estate during a walking tour of Scotland in 1618. Jonson was already well known north of the border. A 1616 edition of his Works was available in Scotland, and the fact that King James awarded him a royal pension enhanced Jonson's status outside of England. During the same visit, the Edinburgh Town Council appointed Jonson as honorary burgess and guild brother in the city. It has not been possible to trace a particularly Neostoic element in Drummond's surviving writings. However Drummond's exchanges with Jonson may have contributed to a wider familiarity with Jonson's Neostoic preferences among the Scottish intelligentsia of the day.

[120] Jonson's copy of Lipsius' Politics is included in an eight-volume set of Lipsius' writings that the poet once owned. The set is now housed in the library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge University.

[121] Evans, Robert C., Jonson, Lipsius and The Politics of Renaissance Stoicism (Durango, CO: Longwood Academic and Hollowbrook Publishers, 1992). I am grateful to Professor Evans for discussing further his work on Jonson and Lipsius with me and for providing citations for earlier treatments of the connections between these two figures.

Jonson's work has been acknowledged for some time.[122] Although Jonson shared Lipsius' concerns about ethics and morality, the evidence in the surviving copy of Jonson's edition of Lipsius suggests that it was ultimately with Lipsius' political thought that Jonson was concerned.

Reading with Evans, it becomes clear that Jonson's markings are more extensive in the first two and the fourth books of the Politics, where Lipsius' emphasis on morality is especially pronounced. In Book I Jonson underlined and marked with arrows passages where Lipsius instructed that effective princes must be virtuous men, and that princely power should be employed strictly for the common good:

"Doth he leade us the way to vertue? We followe. To vice? We encline thither. Liueth he an honest, and blessed life? We flourish. Is he vnfortuante? We decline, or runne to ruine with him."[123]

Jonson seemed especially interested in passages that described the character and utility of virtue, and the requirement to advance the common good.

"I define Ciuill life, to be THAT WHICH WE LEADE IN THE SOCIETIE OF MEN, ONE WITH ANOTHER, TO MUTUALL COMMODITIE AND PROFIT, AND COMMON VSE OF ALL. I assigne vnto it two guides, Prudence, and Vertue:" ... "because I can not be induced to beleeue, anie can possibly be a good Citizen, except likewise he be an honest man. Without vertue, such wisdome should rather be a subtill craft, and malice, and any other thing rather than prudence. And albeit, that by the sterne thereof properly, ciuill life be gouerned,

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[122] See Trimpi, Wesley, Ben Jonson's Poems: A Study of the Plain Style (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 60-66; Croll, Morris W., Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, (ed.) Patrick, J. Max et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 176; Williamson, George, The Senecan Amble (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 121-49.

[123] Evans, Robert, C., Jonson, Lipsius and The Politics of Renaissance Stoicism (Durango, CO: Longwood Academic and Hollowbrook Publishers, 1992), p. 29.

yet it is not without the vse, and aide, of the other loadstone." ... "for the glorie of beautie, and riches is fraile, ... but vertue euer shineth, and is eternall."[124]

The passages that appeared to be of special interest to Jonson in Book II of the Politics concern justice, clemency on the part of rulers, and faith. Jonson underlined Lipsius' definition of clemency and highlighted passages where Lipsius confirmed Seneca's notion that the wise ruler used clemency to enhance virtuous character and wisdom:

"I present now vnto our Prince Clemencie, that other light, which is as I may call it, the Moone of Empires. This goddesse, is mild and gracious, who doth mollifie, and temper matters, taketh away the hurtfull, rayseth vp them that fall, and runneth to preserue those, that throw themselves headlong into daunger. I know not how I should describe it in other wordes, then TO BE A VERTUE OF THE MIND, WHICH WITH JUDGEMENT, ENCLINETH FROM PUNISHMENT, OR REUENGE, TO LENITIE. This, of all other vertues is most fit for man, because it agreeth best with his nature."[125]

Jonson also noted Lipsius' description lesser virtues that should 'adorn' a prince:

"I come now to those which I termed lesser lights, these are vertues, not in equall measure so excellent and necessarie to the prince, as the former I recited, yet they are very profitable: which as starres I will plant, and fasten, in the heauen of this supreme head. ... Be thou BOUNTIFULL, for there is nothing that fitteth better with the nature of man, then liberalitie: Loue CHASTITIE: For there can be no honest thine remayne in a mind corrupt with lust. Refraine from ANGER: either be thou not angrie at all, or do not hide it: for it is more honourable for a Prince to offend, then to hate. Make small account of SLAUNDEROUS SPEECHES: ..., Yet have care of thy GOOD NAME & remember that the counsels of good men tend to consider, what is profitable for their owne particular: But the state of Princes is farre different, whose cheefest care in all their actions, ought to be, to haue a good report."[126]

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[124] Ibid., p. 160.
[125] Ibid., pp. 220-21.
[126] Ibid., pp. 237-39.

On religion, Jonson noted Lipsius' commendation of faith as the 'stay of mankind':

"You haue alreadie two lights, from whose brightnesse, and reuebertation as it were, two other are inflamed, Faith and Modestie. Of the which faith, is so near a neighbor vnto Justice, that you may truly affirme, the one taketh her beginning from the other. Neither doth it greatly import, from which each other proceedeth. For, ... Faith is the ground-worke and foundation of Justice."[127]

In Book IV Jonson noted passages where Lipsius commented on prudence, suggesting that it belonged 'peculiarly' to a prince for the faithful execution of prudential behaviour and depended on an unwavering nature available only to the most virtuous of men. Jonson underscored passages where Lipsius drew connections between prudence, self-command and the need for both in dealing with the uncertainties of the world:

"We giue best credit to that which we know of his owne nature is not subject to change. And surely it is impossible for any man to reduce that which is vncertaine, to certaine and strict limits of precepts. lastly, it is Obscure, because the affaires and successe of worldly matters, are couered with a thicke mist. For God doth hide their beginnings from vs, under diuerse forms. And as Lucretius sayeth: A certaine hidden force doth continually trample vnder foot the affaires of this world, and spurneth at the glorious Scepters, and princely ornaments, and seemeth to make a scorne of them."[128]

Evans concluded that Jonson's markings of his copy of the Politics attest to the poet's strong interest in Lipsius' ideas and in the political lessons Lipsius drew from ancient sources. While this can only be speculation, it would have been

[127] Ibid., p. 227.

unusual for Jonson to pay such close attention to Lipsius' book unless he found it particularly worthwhile. Further evidence of Jonson's admiration for the Flemish thinker is found in Jonson's Discoveries, a compilation of Jonson's personal reflections written over a decade between the mid-1620s and the mid-1630s that was his most significant prose piece. The Discoveries treat matters such as the need for wise counsellors in public life; the benefits of humility and virtue; and a prince's obligation to advance learning in society. Evans provides a convincing analysis of specific passages that have direct parallels to the Politics both in spirit and specific content.

In sum, Evans correctly noted, Jonson and Lipsius shared a world view that heartily endorsed the notion that Christian morality combined with classical virtue provided the best means for securing personal well-being and social order. Like the Scottish literati in the 18th century, they endorsed moderation, and examined politics in its broadest sense to include matters of religion, private morality, economics, and public ethics. Ultimately Lipsian Neostoicism provided a guide for all manner of social conduct to which Jonson seemed to subscribe. Jonson's prominent place in English literary life placed him at an advantage to foster awareness of Neostoic themes. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that Jonson's contribution to awareness of Neostoic themes in his own day, and in later years, was considerable.

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[128] Ibid., p. 243.

The Natural Law Tradition: Grotius and Pufendorf

If philosophy and literature form two of the major conduits for the dissemination of Neostoic themes in early modern European intellectual life, politics and the natural law tradition form the third. The chapter now turns to a discussion of two dominant figures of the natural law tradition who shared a distrust of absolute monarchy, and advocated consultative forms of government deriving from the republicanism that manifested itself in Geneva and the Dutch Republic during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The 1590s ushered in a period of relative harmony to the Dutch Republic following the religious strife we know Lipsius attempted to ease. A decade of territorial expansion and economic growth began that was astonishing given the turmoil of the Republic's immediate past. The Republic's prosperity stemmed initially from its gradual dominance of North Sea trading routes, combined with its merchants' skillful cultivation of the market in basic staples across Europe. The practical manifestations of the Republic's political and economic power were underscored by the development of political ideologies that explored the nature of republicanism and citizenship. While Lipsius' contribution to political thought has been acknowledged, it was Lipsius' near contemporary, Hugo Grotius, who developed the defining model for Dutch republicanism that modern day historians recognise. Grotius formally articulated a political ideology that strengthened the legitimacy of the republican status quo by rooting it in a historical framework.

Grotius was a child prodigy, who showed considerable promise as a humanist scholar when he matriculated at the University of Leiden in 1594 at the comparatively young age of eleven. His father served as curator to the University, and his extended family included lawyers and professionals who strongly supported republicanism. If Grotius inherited a proclivity for republicanism, it was most likely compounded by his experiences at Leiden.

Despite being founded by Prince William of Orange, the Leiden of Grotius' day was a centre of opposition to the Prince's successors, who challenged the Republic's autonomy with threats of military force. The University was also a focal point for anti-Calvinist Arminianism,[129] which influenced Grotius' political thought in that he adopted the Arminians' advocacy of religious toleration. He also emphasized in later religious writings that it was more important for Christians of all denominations to focus their attention on the central truths of their faith rather than be distracted by infighting between denominations.[130]

In his De Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavicae (1610) and in an unpublished essay, De Republica Emendanda (ca. 1600-10), Grotius praised the republican character of the Dutch constitution, emphasizing that the Republic's liberty and prosperity

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[129] Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), the Dutch Protestant theologian, who developed the doctrine that Christ died for all people rather than solely for the Elect, was appointed one of three professors of theology at Leiden in 1603.

[130] For references and further discussion of the Arminian, Dutch Collegiant and Remonstrant traditions, see Fix, Andrew, Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); on Grotius' biographical details, see Liggio, Leonard P., preface editorial to Veatch, Henry B., "Natural Law: Dead or Alive", in *Literature of Liberty*, October/December 1978.

were best protected by an oligarchy.[131] He endorsed the benefits of the Republic's order and increasing stability. He argued that the overthrow of Spanish tyranny provided essential proof of Dutch republican credentials, emulating the example of Holland's ancient ancestors, the Batavians, who had revolted against Roman occupation centuries earlier.[132]

Grotius sought to prove that the focal point of Batavian, and indeed contemporary, political power was the state. All civil and ecclesiastical authority emanated from the state, and citizens owed first allegiance to civil rather than to religious institutions.[133] Grotius also endorsed the aristocratic character of the Batavian and later Dutch polities, underlining his acceptance of a system of privilege that secured the power of the oligarchy, and by extension the liberty of individual citizens. Perhaps most importantly from a commercial point of view was Grotius' belief that liberty was a necessary precondition and guarantor of prosperity. Through prosperity the Republic secured itself against any threat of political or economic dependency. And it may have been particularly due to a wish to protect the Republic's prosperity that Grotius endorsed Dutch imperial ambitions in his Annales et historiae (1657, published posthumously).

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[131] Richard Tuck points out that in taking this position, Grotius was arguing against the idea of mixed constitutions. For various discussions of this point see Tuck, Richard, Natural Rights Theories (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), and his Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[132] See Tuck, Richard, Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651, pp. 160-63; and Leeb, Leonard, The Ideological Origins of the Batavian Revolution (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973).

[133] For example, Grotius and Jan van Oldenbarnevelt, the leading statesman of the United Provinces of the day, attempted to prevent in-fighting between orthodox Calvinists and Arminians within the Dutch Reformed Church by elevating the power of the state over religious institutions.

It remained, however, for Dutch intellectuals to define the moral ethos of Dutch commercial culture. Leading figures like Grotius addressed this problem within the context of exploring the political ideologies and concepts of natural law that formed the intellectual core of Dutch republicanism. Eighteenth-century Scots were very familiar with Grotius' work, particularly at the University of Glasgow, where as we will see in chapter three, Francis Hutcheson did much to incorporate the natural law scholars into the curriculum. However, even more influential than Grotius was Samuel Pufendorf.

Samuel Pufendorf was born to a Lutheran minister in Saxony in 1632. He was educated at the Universities of Leipzig and Jena, where he took courses in mathematics and first came into contact with the works of Grotius and Thomas Hobbes. During the late 1650s, Pufendorf was tutor to a Swedish family, who took the young scholar to their native country. His stay there was disrupted by a war between Sweden and Denmark, during the course of which Pufendorf was arrested and imprisoned. He returned to Germany in 1660 to take up the first professorship in natural law at the University of Heidelberg, where he stayed until 1667. He then moved to the University of Lund, where he wrote On the Law of Nature and of Nations (1672), the condensed version of which was published as On the Duty of Man and Citizen. In 1686 Pufendorf was appointed court historian to the Great Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William of Prussia, in whose service Pufendorf stayed until his death in 1694.

On the Duty of Man and Citizen became the seminal text for the study of natural law soon after it was published. Its success prompted Pufendorf to claim that he

was the successor to Grotius as the leading exponent of natural law theory in Europe. While he was apparently criticized by some of arrogance in making this claim, the significance of his work was quickly recognised.

As J.B. Schneewind has noted, in On Duty Pufendorf operated from the premise that the study of natural law was not contingent upon studying religion or theology. Natural law was an autonomous discipline, which ought to be considered with reference to the laws of nature through which human beings interacted.[134] Pufendorf based his assertion on his interpretation of Martin Luther's notion that a 'moral gulf' existed between God and man, and by analogy between theology and science or reason. The middle ground between these two provided a place within which natural law could be examined free of philosophical extremes. Knud Haakonssen clarifies this point:

"In Germany, Pufendorf was part of the Lutheran reaction to Grotius, ... The German debate principally concerned the relationship between natural law and moral theology, with most orthodox Lutherans insisting that the former was based on the latter. ... Allowing for a great many variations, it is this theme of the dependence of natural law upon revealed religion which is one of Pufendorf's main targets. ... Pufendorf took as his stand against the Lutherans of his day by insisting on Luther's own assertion of the rational and moral gulf between God and man. However, whereas the reformer was led from this to a suspicion and neglect of natural law, the natural lawyer saw the possibility of developing it as a complete 'science of morals', sharply separate from moral theology and analogous to the new deductive science."[135]

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[134] Scheewind, J.B., Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant: An Anthology, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 157.
[135] Haakonssen, Knud, Natural Law and Moral Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 36-37.

In his own introductory notes to On Duty, Pufendorf summarized the points he wished to make concerning duty and natural law. These were then developed at considerable length. Pufendorf began his introductory remarks by drawing the reader's attention to the fact that the 'light of reason' showed that knowledge of duty and the performance of duty are generally considered morally good. Knowledge of duty arose from three possible sources, in life: the 'light of reason'; civil authority; and, divine law. From this knowledge arose distinctions between kinds of duty in society and classifications into which the study of law was divided.

"From the first [the light of reason] flow the commonest duties of man, especially those which make him sociable with other men; from the second [civil authority], the duties of man in so far as he lives subject to a particular and definite State; from the third [divine law], the duties of man who is a Christian. From these three separate duties arise, the first of which is the natural law, common to all nations; the second, the civil law of the single individual States, into which the human race departed. The third is called moral theology in contradistinction to that part of theology which explains what is to be believed [that is, dogmatic theology]."[136]

Each form of law operated under the sanction of the authority presiding over it. That is to say, natural laws were obeyed because right reason dictated so in accordance with sociable principles. Civil laws were followed at the express command of a magistrate or lawgiver. Moral theologians followed the commands of Scripture as prescribed by God himself. It was particularly important to distinguish moral theology from natural law, and for Pufendorf's

[136] Samuel Pufendorf, On the Duty of Man and Citizen, in Schneewind, J.B., Moral Philosophy from Montaigne to Kant: An Anthology, Vol. I, p. 158.

readers to appreciate that natural law was concerned only with the affairs of the present world:

"that is by far the most important distinction whereby the end and aim of the natural law is included only in the circuit of this life, and therefore it moulds man accordingly as he ought to lead this life in society with others. But moral theology moulds man as a Christian, who should not only have the purpose of passing honorably through this life, but who especially hopes of the fruit of piety after this life, … . Hence the decrees of the natural law are adapted only to the human forum. … From this also it follows that, … the human forum is busied with only the external actions of man, … ."[137]

In Chapter II of Book I of On Duty, Pufendorf explained his general theory of obligation from which he developed his understanding of sociability. Human action, he began, was triggered by the will, and human will was never consistent or regular. To establish some remnant of order in life, it was essential that human beings subscribe to certain norms and standards of behaviour across society. These norms formed a code or law by which people lived, and this law was usually decreed by one of the above mentioned authorities.

This need for a set of norms brought with it a set of corresponding obligations, which assured the regular conduct of all members of society. Obligation was defined as, "… a legal bond, by which we are of necessity bound to perform something."[138] One's sense of obligation restrained the will; if it failed to do so in any given circumstance, an additional sanction to act in accordance with obligations came from the just threat of punishment by the relevant lawgiver. However Pufendorf emphasized the fact that human beings had a measure of

[137] Ibid., p. 159.

control over will in life, and that they were as likely to consent to fulfil their obligations as they were to be tempted against it.

In chapter III, Pufendorf turned his attention to sociability. His discussion opened by comparing and contrasting the behaviour of human beings and animals, who display different levels of need for their fellow kind. At some point in life, Pufendorf argued, both men and beasts derive benefits from interaction with their fellow kind. It was impossible to imagine, he suggested, that man could reach adulthood without receiving aid or assistance from another person in society. In fact:

"... whatever advantages now attend human life have flowed entirely from the mutual help of men. It follows that, after God, there is nothing in this world from which greater advantage can come to man than from man himself."[139]

Human beings were clearly capable of acting from malevolent impulses against their fellow members of society, particularly if one's life or livelihood was threatened. But generally a person relied upon law and regular conduct in society to protect their life and interests. Therefore, Pufendorf continued, people were:

"... highly adapted to promote mutual interests; but on the other hand no less malicious, insolent, and easily provoked, also as able as he is prone to inflict injury upon another. Whence it follows that, in order to be safe, he must be sociable, that is, must be united with men like himself, and so conduct himself toward them that they may have no good cause to injure him, bur rather may be ready to maintain and promote his interests."[140]

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[138] Ibid., p. 160.
[139] Ibid., p. 162.
[140] Ibid., p, 163.

The laws of sociability that regulated conduct are natural laws.

"So much settled, it is clear that the fundamental natural law is this: that every man must cherish and maintain sociability, so far as in him lies."[141]

And finally, the authority of natural law was underscored by utility and Divine sanction.

"Again, although those precepts [natural law] have manifest utility, if they are to have the force of law, it is necessary to presuppose God exists, and by His providence rules all things; also that He has enjoined upon the human race that they observe those dictates of reason, as laws promulgated by Himself by means of our natural light. ... But that God is the author of the natural law, is proved by the natural reason, ..."[142]

It is from Pufendorf's theory of obligation and sociability that duties proceeded. Again duties were divided into three categories: duties owed to God; duties owed to oneself; and, duties owed to one's fellow man. Duties to other members of society clearly proceeded from the general rules of sociability. Given the interrelated nature of the relationship between natural law and God, duties to God were indirectly derived from sociability as well. Duties to oneself, however, came from religion and sociability 'conjointly':

"For the reason why he cannot determine certain acts concerning himself in accordance with his own free will, is partly that he may be a fit worshipper of the Deity, and partly that he may be a good and useful member of human society."[143]

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[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., p. 165.

Pufendorf made one final distinction between mutual duties, or those one person owed another: absolute and conditional duties. The former were those duties that sprang from a 'common obligation' set by God, duties of 'anyone to anyone' that bound all members of society. It was an absolute duty not to kill another person. The latter were duties 'introduced or received by men' that involved certain individuals. When combined these two types of duties governed the complete range of human behaviour.

Pufendorf's multi-layered theory of sociability was built upon a number of assumptions about human nature. Like a wild animal, a person's first concern was with self preservation. But it soon became evident to a rational intelligent person that it was impossible to guarantee personal security without reference to other members of society. As people became increasingly aware of their mutual dependence in society, levels of sociability increased. Over time in history, a system of obligation and duty arose as understanding of sociability became more sophisticated. The natural laws that governed society were underscored by certain moral principles, but as Haakonssen reminds readers, Pufendorf separated the moral and physical worlds in his system:

"The moral and physical world are two self-contained spheres, which is to say there is no moral quality or purpose inherent in the physical world. Values are not among the natural qualities. ... In order for things or events in nature to acquire value, they have to be related to a norm, and this can be done only by beings who can understand norms as prescriptions and will thereby do either right or wrong."[144]

[144] Haakonssen, Knud, Natural Law and Moral Philosophy, p. 38.

It is necessary to recall that Pufendorf developed his theory of sociability, locating it within his system of natural law, for the ultimate purpose of reconstructing European political theory. The natural duties and obligations described above took on political dimensions as they were translated into the civic realm. This was particularly true concerning the preservation of property, which became an essential duty for the maintenance of public order.

The relationship of the citizen to the state also depended upon questions of security and self-preservation. States were established by human beings for the express purpose of protecting life and property. When people became members of a state, they owed first allegiance to it and were obliged to place the good of civil society above their personal needs. The performance of civic or political duties underscored the security of the state and the preservation of order, which in turn promoted sociability. As James Tully has explained:

"Since the preservation of this political order is the indispensable means to sociality, and since the obligation to promote sociality entails the obligation to promote the means to it, it follows that men are obliged by God and natural law to perform their political duties. Furthermore, since the performance of political and social duties sustains the order in which individual security and the benefits of society can be attained, it is a matter of one's rational utility to obey."[145]

Despite the well-balanced and finely tuned structure of Pufendorf's theory of society, he was aware that human beings were by nature capable of ignoring both

the sanctions of natural law and the dictates of conscience when deciding to act in a given way. If conscience failed, if a citizen failed to appreciate the benefits derived from acting within the boundaries of sociability, it then fell to the state to control behaviour or restrict passions by enforcing civil laws. In this sense, as Tully rightly pointed out, Pufendorf's 'system of sociality' is incomplete.

Nevertheless, what was particularly interesting about Pufendorf's system of natural law was his re-introduction of the Divine into the social, political and moral order. By doing this Pufendorf departed from Grotius, who argued with the rationalists that natural law need not be contingent upon God to operate fully. By underscoring the power of sanctions to regulate behaviour, and by reiterating that fear of Divine punishment was the ultimate sanction, Pufendorf pointed to God as the ultimate authority over human action. Nevertheless, he maintained that natural law and natural theology were necessarily separate systems. And finally, Pufendorf made a permanent association between civil and Christian duties.

"... Moral theology does more effectively encourage a good quality of civil life, since the Christian virtues too do as much as anything to dispose men's minds to sociality. And, vice versa, if you see anyone engaged in sedition and disrupting civil life, you may safely infer that the Christian religion may be on his lips but has never penetrated to his heart."[146]

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[145] Pufendorf, Samuel, On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law (ed.) James Tully, (trans.) Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See introduction by Tully, p. xxx.

[146] Pufendorf quoted in Moore, James and Silverthorne Michael, 'Protestant Theologies, Limited Sovereignties: Natural Law and Conditions of Union in the German Empire, The Netherlands and

Conclusion

The rise of rationalism, and subsequent debates over the nature of power and understanding of human identity, changed fundamentally the way in which European intellectuals explored the questions: how should one live, and what constituted a moral life? Received teachings from Renaissance humanism that had previously set the perimeters for reflecting on politics, literature, philosophy and ethics were challenged in a new era infused with the spirit of scientific inquiry.

Seventeenth-century intellectuals confronted the task of reconciling the powers of reason, which many admired, with other fundamental elements of human life including faith, ethics, duty and responsibility. Part of the foundation upon which they constructed answers were laid by thinkers at the end of the sixteenth century, men such as Lipsius, Montaigne, du Vair and Jonson, whose lives and work spanned a time of transition between the Renaissance and the seventeenth century. These thinkers were bound not only by their individual interests in the lessons of ancient Stoicism or scepticism, but by a commitment to guaranteeing order and opportunity in society. The stability that was the fruit of order provided much desired security for self and country, but it also ensured that one might pursue philosophical interests in uninterrupted peace.

Great Britain', in Robertson, John (ed.), A Union for Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 174.

The chapter has argued that a multifaceted revival of Stoic ideals took place in the seventeenth century that had its roots in the pioneering work of Justus Lipsius, whose predilection for the more accessible Stoicism of Seneca gained in popularity across academic disciplines. Neostoicism was not universally popular, nor was it taken entirely seriously by the most sceptical of thinkers. However, to the extent that it constituted an avenue of intellectual thought that encouraged the promotion of virtue in practical ways, Neostoicism was a substantive rather than merely formal philosophical school. By connecting Stoicism with Christian principles, Neostoicism equated faith with the development of human nature that was positive, perhaps even progressive.

If one considers the diversity of intellectual figures discussed in this chapter, and the various disciplines in which they were involved, it becomes clear that the discourse on Neostoicism described here permeated European intellectual life during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is suggested that this was a discourse with which eighteenth-century Scots were bound to be familiar. Furthermore, it was a discourse that anticipated many of the Scots' questions about ethics, virtue and human action.

Chapter 3

Morality, Neostoicism and Politeness as Ethical Foundations of Commercial Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland

Introduction

"The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men."[147]

"The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the pleasure of rational creature, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasure of the mind as well as those of the body. The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become. ... They flock into the cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. ... Thus industry, knowledge, and humanity, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages."[148]

When David Hume (1711-76) published the passages above in a collection of essays in 1751, the commercial society to which they referred was established in Scotland. The country's general economic fortunes improved dramatically as a result of the Treaty of Union with England (1707), which greatly increased Scotland's access to valuable English markets and commercial trading routes.

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[147] Hume, David, 'Of Commerce', in his Essays Moral, Political and Literary, (ed.) Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), p. 255.
[148] Hume, David, 'Of Refinement in the Arts', in ibid., p. 271.

The comparative prosperity that followed in the decades immediately after union ushered in an era during which the fabric of Scottish society was altered by the emergence of newly strengthened merchant and professional classes. The members of these middling ranks of society sought to cultivate a more refined sense of manners and taste that accompanied greater degrees of wealth in civilised societies.

The refinement of Scottish society was essential in Hume's and the Enlightenment literati's view to define their country's place within the new Hanoverian order in Great Britain. While some Scots objected to the surrendering of political supremacy to the Parliament at Westminster, an overwhelming majority of Scotland's political, intellectual and social leaders supported union. The growth in Scotland's commercial activity brought with it the challenge to address how to avoid greed or self-interest becoming the dominant characteristics of Scotland's emerging commercial culture.

It fell to Hume and his Enlightenment colleagues to investigate these matters and they did so by examining the principles of human nature that affected the way eighteenth-century society functioned. They examined the roles played by virtue, imagination, sense and reason in determining the ethos of commercial culture.

The Enlightenment literati made these efforts within the framework of the intellectual legacy inherited from seventeenth-century European discussion about Neostoicism, moral philosophy and natural law. This discussion was transported into Scottish intellectual life during the early decades of the eighteenth century by

academics influenced by the natural law tradition of Grotius and Pufendorf. Scottish scholars were concerned with defining the proper relationship between philosophy and theology, morality and religion, and natural and revealed religion. They also appreciated that as a result of the philosophical and theological controversies from the Renaissance through the seventeenth century, the emphasis upon the forces of reason and science in society threatened the traditional role organized religion played as the primary arbiter of moral conduct in Christian societies.

Early Scottish moral philosophy attempted to find a rational basis for moral belief within the context of investigating human nature. As in the seventeenth century, the Scots' discussions about the nature of morality and moral knowledge fell between two philosophical extremes: the first suggested that moral laws could only be identified through revelation from God; the second suggested that morality was the product of the innermost workings of human nature. While scholars addressed the nature of morality differently, particularly regarding the religious dimensions of moral decision-making, they shared a common purpose in their inquiries: to identify a moral order in behaviour and human identity, and to ask if this order sprang from external influences or from a natural sense within the human mind and heart. This order was required of all people in society, and underscored the fundamental structure of civilised societies.

We have seen that Grotius and Pufendorf addressed matters of ethics and morality within the context of society and sociability. Pufendorf followed Grotius in developing a political theory based on natural law, which outlined a set

of natural duties and rights that secured liberty and property. These rights and duties were then used to define moral standards affecting all manner of social interaction. Essentially, Grotius and Pufendorf argued that man was by nature a social animal and that the social world was defined by a complex network of authority and mutual obligation through which rights and duties were exercised. When united all of these elements served to form a systematic view of society, which was itself underscored by the laws of nature and Divine Providence.

This natural jurisprudential tradition became the basis for studying moral philosophy in Scotland from the 1690s, when a new generation of professors, loyal to King William III and Queen Mary and accepting of the doctrines of the newly re-established Church of Scotland, set about restructuring elements of the curricula at Scottish universities. The crucial figure to emerge during this process was Gerschom Carmichael, a young relative of the Earl of Hyndford, who was appointed the first Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1727. Carmichael had taught philosophy at the University since 1694, and he was deeply influenced by Pufendorf's theories on law and society. Carmichael's own annotated translation of Pufendorf's On the Duty of Man and the Citizen According to the Natural Law, Two Books (1673) was published in 1727, which Carmichael used as the set text for his course.

Carmichael was succeeded as Professor of Moral Philosophy by Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), an Irish-born clergyman who became the pre-eminent moral theorist of his generation and the philosophical forefather of David Hume

and Adam Smith.[149] Hutcheson shifted the direction in which Scottish moral philosophy evolved by developing a theory of the moral sense, a God-given faculty that permitted human beings to distinguish between good and evil, or between morally correct or incorrect behaviour. This theory was taken up by Hume and Smith, although they altered it according to the priorities of their own philosophical arguments.

As Christopher Berry has recently noted, the study of moral philosophy in eighteenth-century Scotland owed much of its dynamism to the social forces active in Scottish society as the eighteenth century opened.[150] Intellectual debates occurred against the backdrop of dramatic changes in Scotland's political, economic and social landscape. As the century continued, the Scots became increasingly interested in the civilizing powers of commerce in society, forces that emanated from combining positive ethical values with new material resources to promote the common good. Taken to their best extreme, these civilizing powers served to encourage politeness, a refinement in manners, taste and passions that became the hallmark of civilised members of society.[151]

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[149] The young Hume sought Hutcheson's advice while drafting A Treatise on Human Nature (1739-40). For Smith, Hutcheson was the 'never-to-be-forgotten' professor of his undergraduate days.

[150] Berry, Christopher, Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), see esp. chapter 7.

[151] For the relationship between commerce and politeness, see Pocock, J.G.A., 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers', in Hont, Istvan and Michael Ignatieff (eds), Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 241). Pocock wrote of Europe generally, "There had been - it began to be said - a fanaticism of virtue no less than of religion; just as the enthusiast flung himself into fantasies of faith for lack of taste and polite discrimination, so - declared Montesquieu - Lycurgus and Plato promulgated harsh disciplines and rigorous metaphysics to the inhabitants of a restrictive and under-specialized antique economy. With the growth of trade and more complex exchange of relationships, manners began to be softened and passions refined, *le doux commerce* made its appearance, and 'conversation', 'intercourse' and 'commerce' could be used synonymously to denote economic, cultural or sexual transaction. Commerce was the parent of politeness, … ."

Politeness had its antecedents in seventeenth-century French treatments of morality and literature. As Peter France has noted politeness was something more than civility in social interaction.[152] At its best, politeness contained a moral dimension that involved a constant consideration of others, which in turn fostered a kind of altruism in society. In its more overly-refined or exaggerated form, politeness was an artificial construct that defined standards of taste and well-mannered behaviour among the prosperous ranks of French society.

As translations of French essays on politeness appeared in Britain, the tenets of polite behaviour were adopted by the middling ranks in London and other urban areas. Joseph Addison (1672-1719), an English essayist, became one of the capital's leading exponents of politeness. Addison founded the leading polite journal, *The Spectator*, with Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) in 1711. This daily London journal was intended for audiences of comfortable means who formed the professional and merchant classes, and it encouraged discerning individuals to contemplate human nature with a view towards self-improvement through the acquisition of manners.

It is a well established methodology in Scottish Enlightenment historiography to examine developments in Scottish moral philosophy within the context of these natural jurisprudential and polite paradigms. This chapter attempts to summarize

[152] See France, Peter, Politeness and its Discontents (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 57.

key features of both approaches that influenced the Enlightenment literati's understanding of connections between morality, virtue and commercial activity.

With the contributions of Grotius and Pufendorf discussed in chapter two, this chapter opens by noting the manner in which Pufendorf's theory of society was transmitted into Scottish moral philosophical debate by Carmichael. The chapter then discusses Francis Hutcheson's pioneering development of a theory of the moral sense operating in society that was a cornerstone of his ethical theory. Hutcheson's moral philosophy as it pertained to virtue and benevolence will be examined at greater length in Part III within the context of his interest in Stoicism.

While Hutcheson embodied many of the virtuous and polite principles that his Enlightenment successors found so appealing, he was not a philosopher of politeness as such. It was not until David Hume was writing his own essays on sociability, taste and manners that politeness took firm hold in determining the criteria of civilised behaviour in Scottish commercial culture.

In order to understand more clearly the nature of the polite behavior Hume advocated, the chapter continues by examining the work of the French Moralist, Jean de La Bruyère, whose book of maxims on politeness became the first popular treatment of the subject widely read in Britain. Joseph Addison's own treatment of politeness will then be reviewed, paying particular attention to Addison's interest in religion and Stoicism that underpinned the moral dimensions of his thought. Like Hutcheson, Addison was influenced by English

Latitudinarian theology, and Addison adopted Latitudinarian ideals that led to his formulation of what Margaret Jacob has called 'godly capitalism'. The chapter will conclude by commenting on what the nature of 'godly capitalism' was, and how through this 'godly capitalism' Addison connected politeness, faith and society in ways that anticipated connections made by the Enlightenment literati.

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Carmichael's Objection to Pufendorf Concerning Natural Theology

While Gerschom Carmichael is more accurately considered a pre-Enlightenment rather than Enlightenment figure in Scottish intellectual history, his ties to the Enlightenment are strong given his introduction of the natural law tradition into Scottish universities. However in Francis Hutcheson's view,[153] Carmichael's greatest contributions to the study of moral philosophy were found in his own work, most notably in the notes Carmichael prepared that were appended to his translation of Pufendorf's On the Duty of Man and Citizen.[154]

While Carmichael was deeply appreciative of Pufendorf's rational and systematic approach to natural law, his admiration for Pufendorf was not unqualified. He appreciated the fact that Pufendorf's system of natural law re-introduced the Divine into the social, political and moral order. He had concerns about

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[153] See Hutcheson's Preface to Hutcheson, Francis, A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (Glasgow, R. & A. Foulis, 1755). The book was originally published in 1747.
[154] For Carmichael's notes see Carmichael, Gerschom, Gerschom Carmichael on Samuel Pufendorf's *De Officio Hominis et Civis Juxta Legem Naturalem Libri Duo* [compiled] John Lenhart [trans.] Charles H. Reeves (Published privately, 1985. Printed by Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1985). For a description of Carmichael's teaching and his

Pufendorf's understanding of the nature of the relationship between natural theology, revealed religion and natural law. Carmichael argued against Pufendorf by explaining that there was a necessary connection between natural theology and natural law:

"I have asserted more than once, ... that a genuine philosophy of morals must be built upon natural theology as its foundation, as it were, and that every well founded distinction of good and evil in our actions ... must be deduced from the perceived relation of those actions to God, that is, to our knowledge of the existence, perfections and providence of the supreme being."[155]

Carmichael insisted that natural theology was the foundation of natural jurisprudence. He did not, however, insist on a tie between Christianity or revealed religion and natural jurisprudence per se. Carmichael based his conclusions upon his belief that divine scripture did not provide direct guidance relevant to the development of political systems or civil law. It was preferable to rely upon human experience as relayed by 'natural theologians and natural jurists'.

As Moore and Silverthorne pointed out, Carmichael's natural theology stemmed from three sources. Firstly, Carmichael investigated arguments from design deriving from 'experimental theology', which enhanced understanding of the natural world order determined by providence. The knowledge derived from this

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favourable contemporary reputation, see Wodrow, Robert, Analecta: Or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences (Edinburgh, 1842-43, Vol. 4, pp. 95-96.

[155] Carmichael, Gerschom, Synopsis *Theologiae Naturalis, sive Notitiae, De Exitentia, Attributis et Operationibus, Summi Nummis, ex ipsa rerum Natura, Studiosae Jeventutis usibus accommodata* (Edinburgh, 1729), p. 9, quoted in Moore, James and Silverstone, Michael, 'Gerschom Carmichael and natural jurisprudence', in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael (eds), Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, p. 78.

ever-increasing understanding confirmed the presence of an All Wise Creator. However Carmichael was more interested in arguments from design that referred to the moral and political than physical worlds. Therefore secondly, Carmichael followed Malebranche in believing that the human mind was capable of uniting itself:

"...with the perceptible world and with the minds of other men by the instinctive tendency to imitate and sympathize with the feelings of others. Since the ability of men to live in society and in peace with others depends so much upon natural instincts and feelings of this kind which human beings could never have invented for themselves, we must conclude that our instinctive propensities for social life are better traced to the providence of the supreme being."[156]

Thirdly, Moore and Silverthorne continue, Carmichael found evidence of natural theology in his investigation into the nature of matter. Matter was by definition imperfect in form and motion. Therefore matter existed solely by virtue of being formed and guided by a Supreme Intelligence. Correspondingly, the most illustrious and virtuous dimensions of human nature also proceeded from God. Throughout life human beings strove to transcend their physical and material limitations, particularly in their 'aspiration to think' deeply about the most profound elements of existence. Carmichael suggested that this aspiration, this longing, further confirmed knowledge of a Supreme Being.

"... he [man] arrives by long chains of reasoning at knowledge of the most abstract and recondite truths, not only of things past but of infinite vistas of possible things; thought ascends in its medications beyond the bounds of earth to contemplate the idea of a perfect being, it aspires to beatic enjoyment of this vision of a perfect being ..."[157]

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[156] Ibid., p. 79.
[157] Carmichael, Gerschom, *Synopsis Theologiae Naturalis*, p. 20 quoted in Ibid., p. 79.

It is crucial to take special note of the importance Carmichael assigned to these 'aspirations', for in this longing for complete knowledge the ultimate end of natural law was reflected. Just as man sought complete knowledge, so he longed for complete fulfillment in life and in the afterlife. Therefore the purpose of natural law was to discover how to act in order to prove worthy of salvation. By extension, the 'inspiration for moral conduct' flowed from a pious love of the Author of Nature.

By tracing connections between arguments from design, man's 'instinctive propensities' for social life and a more metaphysically-based proof of God's existence, Carmichael set the perimeters within which Hutcheson and the later Enlightenment literati considered the relationships between natural religion, revealed religion and the laws of sociability. His influence extended beyond the realm of moral philosophy. He developed theories of property and contracts based on Pufendorf and John Locke; he entered into fierce political debate by declaring himself against slavery; and, he also addressed the nature of familial relationships in society. This diversity of interests suggests that Carmichael sought a comprehensive treatment of social and political questions within the framework of his natural law theory, as well as a kind of reconciliation of philosophical and theological priorities that anticipated Enlightenment concerns with the same.

Hutcheson and Good and Evil and his Theory of the Moral Sense

As a practical moralist, Hutcheson followed in the Ciceronian tradition by encouraging his students and readers to exercise their moral abilities through pursuit of the *vita activa*. Hutcheson's advocacy of civic virtue was the defining element of his understanding of the political and moral order, and he was eager to combine his advocacy of virtue with the practical application of Christian faith in daily life. He endorsed the notion that life should be seen as a progress towards virtue, and that individuals are capable of self-improvement. This endorsement of progress in moral life mirrored that of the Roman Stoics, whom Hutcheson admired greatly.[158] Hutcheson's concept of progress also suggested that the philosopher placed a higher estimate on human potential than Calvin and other earlier thinkers had. The best means of achieving progress consisted of following the discipline of duty and virtue and the lessons of experience.[159]

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[158] It should also be noted that in addition to being influences by the works of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, whose Meditations he translated, Hutcheson was familiar from an early age with the works of Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), John Locke (1632-1704) and the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper (1671-1713). Clarke was an Anglican Latitudinarian theologian, who ranked with Locke and Newton as one of the leading English thinkers of the seventeenth century. Clarke followed Malebranche in excluding sentiment from his system of morals, relying instead of reason to determine the existence of God and focussed on the attributes of the Divine. Ultimately, Clarke produced a systematic Christian rationalist paradigm, which Hume later attacked. See main text for references to some influences of Shaftesbury and Locke on Hutcheson's theory.

[159] Despite this, it was not Hutcheson's view that the average person could appreciate or be served by the complex details of philosophical reasoning. See Hutcheson, Francis, A System of Moral Philosophy (Glasgow: R. & A. Foulis, 1755), Preface, p. v: "He not only thought that these kind of arguments were not adapted to the capacity of the bulk of mankind, but even they could afford no solid and permanent conviction to the learned themselves. It was his opinion in this early part of his life, and he never saw cause to alter it, that some subjects from their nature are capable of a demonstrative evidence, so others admit only of a probable one; and that to seek demonstration where probability can only be obtained is almost as unreasonable as to demand to see sounds or hear colours."

Hutcheson sought not to promote the received legacy of natural jurisprudence for its own sake, but to use theories of society and morality for the betterment of individual and civil life. He did so primarily by constructing a theory of morality and the moral sense that showed the inadequacies of the egoistic philosophy of Thomas Hobbes by drawing clear distinctions between benevolent and selfish passions as motivations of human action. Furthermore, he proposed using the tools of natural science to cultivate a Christian science of man within which his theory of morality operated. Hutcheson believed that the key to moral goodness was not divine grace alone, but was found by fostering the happiness of others in society.

The chief aim of Hutchesonian moral philosophy was to eradicate the notion that principles of self-interest were sufficient to explain the nature and purposes of morality. He acknowledged that human behaviour was often motivated by self-love, but this did not imply that all social action derived from selfish motives. This provided Hutcheson with a basis for his theory of the moral sense that relied upon benevolence rather than self-interest as the primary motivation of moral action. He also challenged the Calvinist definition of a moral sense contingent upon knowledge of God. This, in turn, led Hutcheson to promote the cultivation of virtue on society to secure the greatest possible degree of civic responsibility, personal integrity and social tranquility among the citizenry.

Although he was charged with heresy for it, Hutcheson contended that the true scheme of morals "... we are conscious of in our own bosom, and which must be acknowledged to operate in some degree in the whole human species ..." was the

product of observation and experience, rather than morality contingent on God or artificial speculation.[160] He believed, like Bishop Joseph Butler, in using probable reasoning when dealing with the application of religion to practical life. Attempts to prove conclusively that God existed, or indeed to try to determine the nature of the Divine beyond what might be probable, would have had, "... very dangerous consequences to the interest of truth and religion ...", as they "... leave the mind in such a state of doubt and uncertainty as leads to absolute scepticism ... ."[161] Hutcheson was exonerated of the charges of heresy, but he maintained his belief in the "original dignity of human nature"[162] as a sufficient basis from which to judge morally good and evil behaviour.

The basis for Hutcheson's argument against egoistic systems was his belief that self-interest failed to provide a sufficient or complete explanation of morality. He acknowledged that human action was often motivated by self-love, but self-love existed within the context of a previously existing set of moral rules that determined the nature of correct moral conduct. These rules, like benevolence itself, were simply part of the nature of human life, therefore theories of virtue or morality had to be constructed from them. Hutcheson clarified the origins of his theory of the moral sense in his An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil (1725).

Hutcheson opened the work by defining 'moral goodness' as "... our idea of some quality apprehended in actions, which procures approbation, attended with

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[160] Ibid., p. xiv.
[161] Ibid., p. v.

a desire of the agent's happiness."[163] Moral evil, on the other hand, triggered the condemnation of those around one. He then proceeded to investigate "... what general foundation there is in nature for this difference of actions, as morally good or evil."[164] He located this foundation in the moral sense:

"That some actions have to men an immediate goodness; or, that by a superior sense, which I call a moral one, we approve the actions of others, and perceive them to be their perfection and dignity, and are determined to love the agent; a like perception we have in reflecting on such actions of our own, without any view of natural advantage from them.[165]

The moral sense was designed to regulate human powers, and the dignity from which its authority sprang was manifested in virtue. Virtue:

"... does not lye in the mere sentiment of approbation of certain affections and actions, but in acting agreeably to it," consequently, "... the soul of man, ... bears a resemblance of Divine Intelligence in its rational faculties, but also of the Divine disinterested benignity in its social and public affections: and thus too our internal constitution."[166]

Virtue in turn, was sought for its own sake in society, arising from the belief that the products of the moral sense were ideas that stemmed from benevolent actions based upon original perceptions. The ties between virtue, benevolence and perceptions were intended by God. And because the moral sense was universal,

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[162] Ibid., p. xiii.
[163] Hutcheson, Francis, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, printed from the 4th edition of 1738, Treatise I, Introduction in Brodie, Alexander (ed.), The Scottish Enlightenment: An Anthology (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 1997), p. 119.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., p. 121.
[166] Hutcheson, Francis, A System of Moral Philosophy (Glasgow: R. & A. Foulis, 1755), Preface, p. xix.

virtue was universally attainable. Nevertheless, Hutcheson acknowledged that deficiencies arose with the operations of the moral sense.

From the sense of morality, then, came notions of virtue, ethics, actions and rights. The moral sense distinguished between obligation and constraint: obligations were those sanctions, or duties, that were known to be in accordance with the moral sense; constraints were the opposite. The moral sense governed all individual action, while ethics regulated action in society. Both morality and ethics, and obligations and constraints, functioned under the jurisdiction of Divine benevolence rather than within a determinist framework of any kind. This suggests that at the heart of Hutcheson's system was a world governed through charity rather than strict utility.

Hutcheson's discussion of the moral sense reflected the influence of Locke and Shaftesbury. Hutcheson's emphasis of sentiment and experience seemed to mirror Locke's two sources of knowledge, sensation and reflection.[167] Hutcheson first had access to Shaftesbury's writings while training for the ministry during the 1720s, during which time Hutcheson was also a member of Molesworth's circle. Although Shaftesbury's Notebooks (written 1698) remained unpublished during Hutcheson's life, they illustrate to the modern reader themes that permeated Shaftesbury's other works: virtue, harmony, beauty and the relationships between them. The Notebooks, like Marcus Aurelius' Meditations, were kept by their author as notes on the private reflection that assisted him in the

[167] See Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding on the absence of innate ideas in human beings.

reconciliation of philosophical interest with social duty. This division of the self between private interest and public duty had its roots in Roman Stoicism. Shaftesbury, like Aurelius, tried to find a means of achieving a balance between individual autonomy and social responsibility; and, the balance between the will and choice in the human mind.[168]

Shaftesbury withdrew from the realm of historical traditional religion, and believed in a universal benevolent force operating in the world. He understood the relationship between religion and morals to be interdependent; this interdependence embodied Shaftesbury's natural religion. It was essentially a non-historical theology that focussed on nature holding the keys to human identity and behaviour. The highest goal within Shaftesbury's system was to attain virtue, and then act continually with reference to it, a notion of which Hutcheson approved.

In his Inquiry Concerning Virtue, Shaftesbury presented an ethical system that incorporated the moral sense, moral beauty and benevolence. Man was treated as an individual system within himself, and as a member of a wider social system. The essential element underscoring the harmonious and efficient operation of the individual and society was reason tempered by sympathy, or polite sociability.[169]

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[168] See Klein, Lawrence, Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Klein treats the subject of Shaftesbury and the Stoics throughout his book.

[169] See Shaftesbury's Inquiry quoted in Fowler, Thomas, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882), p. 64: "Thus, men who have the liveliest sense, and are the easiest affected with pain or pleasure, have need of the strongest influence or force of other affections, such as Tenderness, Love, Sociableness, Compassion, in order to preserve a right Balance within, and to maintain them in their duty, and in the just performance of their part; whilst others, who are of cooler blood, or lower key, need not the same ally or

In examining the deep influences of Stoicism on Shaftesbury, Lawrence Klein alluded to the value found in "... inner discourse leading to self-construction."[170] This inner discourse contributed to improving morals because it assisted in the process of cultivating virtue, as did external forms of human action and sociability itself. However, Shaftesbury's natural religion seemed to provide a final guarantee of the connections between all these elements. Of Shaftesbury's religions sociability:

"Like morals themselves, human religiosity had it foundations in natural affection. While the capacity to feel relation to whatever was outside the self exercised itself first in one's closest human relationships, it extended ultimately to the cosmic and divine framework of all existence. Affective sociability made it possible for humans to grasp and appreciate the cosmological framework in which they were located. Thus, religion was a manifestation of intrinsic human sociability."[171]

It is important to note, however, that Shaftesbury posed as many problems for Hutcheson as he offered areas of philosophical compatibility. Shaftesbury was a Deist, whose system of religion de-coupled Christianity from natural religion in moral decision-making. For this reason alone, Hutcheson would, at some point, have had to reject Shaftesbury's system of morality. Nevertheless, in their mutual identification of an autonomous moral sense governing individual human

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counterpart, nor are made by nature to feel those tender and endearing affections in so exquisite degree."" [Reference: Inquiry, Book II, Part 2, section 1.]

[170] Klein, Lawrence, Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness, p. 89.

[171] Ibid., p. 158.

action, both philosophers prepared the ground for further discussion of morality independent of faith during the Enlightenment.[172]

iii

Understanding Politeness: the Legacy of La Bruyère and the French Moralists

Continuing the discussion in chapter two about philosophical preferences in French literary circles, we have seen that in reaction to absolutism dominating terms of political discourse in seventeenth-century France, a generation of intellectuals arose whose writings formed a dialogue about the persona of modern man and the values the contributed to social harmony. These intellectuals, the French Moralists (or French Neo-Stoics[173]), included among others La Bruyère, Charron, Pascal and La Rochefoucauld. Within the limitations of nature and reason, they examined types and purposes of social discussion, the origins of knowledge and language, and the functioning of reason. Their work combined with that Condillac, l'Abbé Trublet, Marivaut, Turgot and Marmontel significantly contributed to British exploration of the same fields.

For our purposes, one of the more interesting elements of the Moralists' legacy was the examination of motivations for moral behaviour. They highlighted the tension that existed since St. Augustine's time over the distinctions between

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[172] They also seemed to anticipate the autonomous regulatory power of Adam Smith's Impartial Spectator.

[173] Some scholars argue for the use of the term Neostoics rather than Moralists in this context. See Levi, Anthony, French Moralists: The Theory of the Passions, 1585-1649 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

genuine virtuousness, altruism and egoism. The Moralists identified a comprehensive new standard by which individual personal integrity and the nature of social interaction were measured, a standard of *politesse* or politeness.[174] The precise nature of politeness was a matter of some controversy.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Peter France has suggested that French politeness was, essentially, 'a constant consideration of others' at every level of existence. While the Moralists agreed upon this basic characteristic, it belies the complexity of politeness as it operated in society and within the human mind. France also suggested that French moral debate was 'constantly intertwined' with literature. Among the cultural sensitivities encouraged by politeness was a distinct awareness of the effect one's words had upon others. the Moralists appreciated the power of language as an efficient social tool, and they tilled fresh intellectual soil as they attempted to answer the question of just how language came to enjoy such influence. Although not a philosopher, La Bruyère became noted for his adeptness at conveying polite moral messages through his elegant use of prose.[175]

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[174] Definitions of politeness varied throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although it is not clear who the precise author of the article was, the term *politesse* was described at length in the Encyclopédie. See Diderot, Denis and Alembert, Jean le Rond d', Encyclopédie, tome douzième (Neufchatel: Samuel Faulche & Compagnie, Libraires & Imprimeurs, 1765), p. 916: "To discover the origin of politeness, it must be ... well defined and this not easily done. It is almost always confused with civility (la civilité) and flattery, of which the first is good, but less excellent and less rare than politeness; the second a poor representation that carries none of politeness' charm (or embellishments). Everyone is capable of learning civility, which only consists of certain terms and arbitrary ceremonies, ...; but politeness cannot be learned unless one has a natural predisposition, and even that, in truth, must be perfected through learning and through social interaction or customs." (IM translation of the original French).

[175] See Smith, Adam, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (ed.) Bryce, J.C. (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), pp. 80-82.

Jean de La Bruyère was born in Dourdan in 1639. Although little is known about his early years, it seems certain that his life as a man of letters began with his appointment as tutor in history to Duke Louis de Bourbon, grandson of the Prince of Condé. After coming of age, the Duke settled a life-long pension upon his tutor, which enabled La Bruyère to pursue his literary interests freely. His most celebrated work, Caracterès ou les Moeurs de ce Siècle, a volume of polite maxims offering moral guidance, was published in 1687. He was inducted into the Académie Française in 1693, and died three years later at his apartments in the Hotel de-Condé in Versailles.

The publication of Caractères established La Bruyère's literary reputation across Europe. Abel Boyer's English translation and excerpation of the work was published under the title Characters of the Virtues and Vices of the Age in 1695. It was the first full treatment of politeness widely read in Britain. It addressed the positive improvements gained through a polite disposition, particularly the refinement of manners[176] in society. Readers were cautioned about varying perceptions of refinement and manners. An overly cerebral understanding of what politeness ought to be could lead to a superficial appreciation of its benefits. Politeness, according to La Bruyère, affected the inner being as much as its conventions governed external appearances. He wrote:

"La politesse ... does not always inspire goodness, equality, complacency, gratitude; but at least it gives the appearances, and makes man seem from the

[176] Improvement of manners was not necessarily tied to intellectual rigour in La Bruyère's view. He suggested that very little depth was required to improve manners; however great depth was needed to 'polish the mind'.

outside what he should be on the inside."[177] Politeness "suited ... received usages and customs; it is attached to the times, the place, the people."[178] It consisted of "a certain attention to making others contented with us and with themselves through our words and manners ...; of mutual pleasing."[179]

Odette de Mourgues has suggested that it is possible to interpret La Bruyère as suggesting that politeness operated in historical isolation. If so, La Bruyère illustrated an important dimension of Moralist thought: while they discussed universal aspects of human nature, they did so within closely controlled boundaries for the purposes of instruction (instruire).[180] This historic vacuum was formulated "... so that the contemporary aspects of their society merged into a more permanent and universal picture."[181] Permanence underscored the dominance of the prevailing autocracy in French political life. However La Bruyère sought to transcend the limitations placed on society by the political and social status quo.

He felt "... the need to escape from the closed world of the moralist and to create patterns of perfection ..."[182] reflecting timeless dimensions of human character, especially those traditionally associated with the heart. The heart was the

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[177] La Bruyère quoted in Laursen, John C., 'Selected Politics in Hume and Kant: Letters on Philosophy and the Language of Politics' (Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1985), p. 108.
[178] Ibid., pp. 163-64.
[179] Ibid., p. 164. An older translation of the relevant full passage from La Bruyère includes the following: "We may define the spirit of politeness though we cannot determine its practice. ...Wit alone cannot attain it, but it may be gained by imitation, and practice prefers it. There are certain temperaments which are impressible through politeness, and there are others which can only be reached by talent or solid virtue. It is true that a polished manner sets off merit and makes it more agreeable, and that it is necessary to have very eminent qualifications to be bearable without it." See La Bruyère, Jean de, The Characters in The Morals and Manners of the Seventeenth Century, Being the Characters of La Bruyère (trans.) Helen Stott (London: David Stott, 1890), p. 75.
[180] See Mourgues, Odette de, The French Moralists La Rochefoucauld & La Bruyère (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 170. It is important here to bear in mind the distinction between politeness and civility, the less refined form of considerate behavior that facilitated social interaction but did not necessarily enhance character.
[181] Ibid., p. 129.

storehouse of an innate natural virtue,[183] compassion and an appreciation of essential human weakness (*faiblesse*), each of which contributed to man's sensibility (*sensibilité*). Sensibility seemed to resemble a *politesse du coeur*, an inward politeness that rejects egoism, combined with a *politesse de l'esprit*, an informed refined state of mind in tune with intellectual inquiry. The heart's characteristic delicacy reflected sensibility's subtlety:

"What provokes the reactions of our sensibility in the world around us may be something as intangible as the perception of a presence ... ."[184]

Though sensibility involved the deepest elements of character and identity, it was tempered by reason. La Bruyère encouraged his readers to look to the world for a full understanding of sensibility.

"... the search is directed outwards, no longer towards the core of our sensibility but towards the many facets of its manifestations."[185]

Among these manifestations were emotions and moods, contrasted with passions and sentimentality, that could create imbalance in heart and mind.[186] The threat of imbalance was a poignant reminder that while sensibility deepened individual

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[182] Ibid., p. 107.
[183] This innate virtue was enjoyed by all human beings irrespective of social rank, distinguishing La Bruyère from La Rochefoucauld and others who attributed virtuous motivation only to the highborn.
[184] La Bruyère on 'Of the Heart' in Caractères quoted in Mourgues, Odette de, The French Moralists La Rochefoucauld & La Bruyère, p. 115.
[185] Ibid., p. 114.
[186] See La Bruyère, Jean de, The Characters in The Morals and Manners of the Seventeenth Century, Being the Characters of La Bruyère (trans.) Helen Stott, p. 65: "All our passions are deceitful; we conceal them as much as possible from the eyes of others, and even try to disguise them to ourselves; there is no vice which has not some spurious resemblance to virtue, and takes advantage of this."

consciousness of the world and society, its contribution to personal improvement was limited by inherent human weakness:

"There are certain losses for which our hearts ought to contain inexhaustible sources of grief. It is seldom through either moral excellence (virtue) or strength of mind (that) a great sorrow (affliction) is overcome. We weep bitterly and are sorely (noticeably) touched, but at last either we are so weak or so fickle (feeble) that we are comforted."[187]

Anticipating Hutcheson, Hume and Smith, La Bruyère's sensibility permitted one to define the balance between the workings of reason and politeness that built tolerance and personal distinction in society. He introduced the faculty of sympathy through which human beings developed a sociable fellow-feeling, which determined the acceptability of actions and manners. Imagination helped identify that desirable balance between the inner self and one's external persona. This balance encouraged calmness and creativity. As De Mourgues suggested, if man was genuinely capable of overcoming his inherent limitations, it was through creative processes that he did so. Therefore aesthetics became crucial in La Bruyère's polite paradigm and matters of taste (goût) entered into his discussion. Aesthetically speaking, great beauty in language and discourse illustrated the delicacies of politeness that were its finest contributions to civilization.[188]

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[187] Ibid., p. 60. (IM modifications of Stott's translation appear in parentheses based on original French text quoted in de Montaigne, p. 118).

[188] Mourgues, Odette de, The French Moralists La Rouchefoucauld & La Bruyère, p. 134: "Language is vulnerable and there is in La Bruyère the suspicion that beauty and fragility go together, that the spoken word, so ephemeral ... is often more subtle, more satisfactory than the written word: 'Il me semble que l'on dit les choses encore plus finement qu'on ne peut les écrire'. (La Bruyère, in section 'De la Societé', 78)."

Furthermore, unlike La Rochefoucauld but like Joseph Addison, La Bruyère was a Christian believer. This introduced another level of motivation to instruct his readers in morality for their own improvement. La Bruyère's faith underscored a degree of personal humility that contrasted sharply with the more artificial forms of politeness that often fueled excessive pride and vanity. Humility contributed to La Bruyère's limited expectations of human improvement, but he retained a degree of optimism about human nature that distinguished him from French sceptics.

iv

Joseph Addison: Trade, Faith, Virtue and the Civilising Powers of Commerce

The world of French Moralists focussed upon universal aspects of human nature that operated within the boundaries of a strictly defined set of social, moral and aesthetic norms. The daily life of refined members of society involved conforming to these established parameters. Yet a number of processes were available to individuals through which the universal aspects of their character transcended established social patterns and modes of behaviour. By exercising imagination or exploring matters of faith, for example, man used his innate faculties to explore profound truths and aspects of humanity that extended beyond social constructs to form the core of human identity.

These processes enabled human beings to distinguish between right and wrong in terms of moral decision-making, as well as to understand the distinctions made in

society between polite and impolite behaviour. Ultimately politeness served multifaceted ends. An inward politeness of the mind enhanced individual speculation that improved one's intellectual and aesthetic discernment as well as moral prowess. Politeness in society governed external behaviour that set the tone for relations with one's peers. This more public form of politeness also encouraged an outward respect for rank and hierarchy that has led some to interpret politeness as an "instrument for non-violent social control."[189]

The politeness of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele applied the French model to British society in distinctly practical ways as the two men sought to provide the clearest possible moral guidance to members of the British merchant and professional classes. The task was as complex as commercial society was itself. Polite Britons had to appreciate the intricate web of obligations and duties through which a multifaceted trading society operated. Individual desires or free will would at times have to be denied for the sake of the public good. The polite citizen had to be on guard against overly artificial interpretations of refined behaviour that distracted one from genuine moral or ethical considerations. And the polite person had to distinguish insofar as possible between propriety in action and the search for genuine virtue in society.[190]

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[189] Peter France paraphrasing Norbet Elias in France, Peter, Politeness and its Discontents, p. 63. See Elias' treatment of the history of manners in Elias, Norbet, The Civilizing Process: The History of Manner and State Formation and Civilization, (trans.) Jephcott, E. (Oxford: Blackwell's Ltd., 1994). Elias does not bring Addison into his discussion; Elias' conclusion about politeness follows Rousseau, who associated politeness with social oppression.

[190] Questions of propriety and virtue were taken up more comprehensively by Adam Smith in his The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1789). Nicholas Phillipson has pointed out that Addison has been criticized for not distinguishing sufficiently between propriety and various forms of virtue. Phillipson also reminded readers that Hume considered Addison's essays "trifling" for their lack of philosophical sophistication and the absence of any formal development of a moral or social theory in Addison's thought. See Phillipson, Nicholas T., 'Adam Smith as civic moralist' in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael (eds), Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy

The social bonds of family and friendship that formed the fabric of society depended upon the smooth operation of this interconnected web of obligations. The British, like their French counterparts, learned to accept that these obligations brought necessary constraints on individual behaviour that underscored social harmony. As Nicholas Phllipson pointed out:

"In Mr Spectator's world, sociability was a skill to be cultivated and valued for the sake of the ease and sense of ego it could provide. In a commercial age men's appetites were constantly aroused by the bewildering variety of objects that were placed before them. They were constantly in danger of becoming prisoners of fashion and prejudice, creatures of fantasy rather than reason. Mr Spectator taught the absurdity of trying to escape from this world by adopting an austere life of stoic virtue. That was advice fit only for the saint, hero and eccentric; it was of no practical help to the ordinary citizen. He showed that in a commercial society men could only live virtuously by constructing a social world which lay outside the family and away from the world of fashion and affairs."[191]

Like La Bruyère, Addisonian politeness encouraged discerning individuals to consider the lessons of life and human experience for the purpose of cultivating self-improvement through the acquisition of manners. They key to success rested in the channeling of passion into intellectual energies, producing a generally moderate tenor of social behavior conducive to cultural harmony. These processes occurred within the context of the commercial society in which Addison and Steele's readers found themselves. Addison's belief that trade and commerce provided Britain with the best means of improving the nation's quality of life and security becomes apparent by reading *The Spectator*. However his

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in the Scottish Enlightenment, p. 189. (Phillipson's reference for the Hume quote comes from Hume's letter to William Strahan, 7 February 1772, in Greig, J.Y.T., Letters of David Hume, Vol. II, p. 257.)

more detailed considerations about the specific advantages of trade and financial dealings are found in his political essays published in *The Freeholder*, a prominent journal for promoting the Whig interests in which Addison was personally committed.[192]

In *The Freeholder* No. XLII of May 14, 1716, Addison extolled the advantages of trade in general which he described as "... absolutely necessary and essential to the Safety, Strength, and Prosperity ..."[193] of the British nation. As an island nation, Britain was entirely dependent upon the judicious use of its maritime capabilities to promote its commercial interests throughout Europe and the colonies. The country's ports were naturally suited to this purpose, and the skills required to operate a commercial fleet contributed by extension to the maintenance of a formidable naval force:

"... as an Island, we are accessible on every Side, and exposed to perpetual Invasions; against which it is impossible to fortify ourselves sufficiently without such a Power at Sea, as is not to be kept up, but by a People who flourish in Commerce. To which we must add, that our inland Towns being destitute of Fortifications, it is our indispensable Concern to preserve this our Naval Strength, which is as a general Bulwark to the British Nation."[194]

Trade also suited the 'Nature of our Country' because Britain had at its disposal sufficient natural resources to supply neighboring countries with staple

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[191] Ibid., pp. 188-89.
[192] For a full account of the rise of the Whig and Tory Parties as well as other political groups from the reigns of King William III to Queen Anne, see Dickinson, H.T., Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. University Paperback, 1979), chapters 3 and 4. The author includes references to Addison's political activities in defence of Whiggism, see esp. pp. 100 and 145.
[193] Addison, Joseph, *The Freeholder* No. XLII in his The Freeholder (ed.) Leheny, James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 224.

manufactured products on a regular basis. This was particularly true in the case of weaving and cloth production, which at the time provided Great Britain with sufficient profits not only to purchase luxury goods from abroad, but to maintain a favourable balance of trade. Addison then defended the regulation of trade on the grounds that it secured this balance of trade advantage. However trade was also desirable for the manner in which it exposed people to other cultures. This encouraged a deeper understanding of foreign societies, which in turn promoted a broader and more sophisticated appreciation in Britain of the civilizing forces of commerce:

"... We are not a little obliged to Trade, as it has been a great means of civilizing our Nation, and banishing out of it all the Remains of its ancient Barbarity. There are many bitter Sayings against Islanders in general, representing them as fierce, treacherous and inhospitable. Those who live on the Continent have such Opportunities of a frequent Intercourse with Men of different Religions and Languages, and who live under different Laws and Governments, that they become more kind, benevolent, and open-hearted to their Fellow-Creatures, than those who are the Inhabitants of an Island, that hath not such Conversations with the rest of the Species. *Caesar's* Observations upon our Fore-fathers is very much to our present Purpose; who remarks, That those of them who lived upon the Coast, or in Sea-Port Towns, were much more Civilized, than those who had their Dwellings in the Inland Country, by reason of frequent Communications with their Neighbours on the Continent."[195]

Addison ended this essay by explaining that trade, with its interconnected network of support industries, was necessary for employment. Without the jobs created by supplying raw materials, manufacturing and distributing of goods, the bulk of the skilled work force in Britain would have suffered massive unemployment. The absence of a thriving commercial network would also have

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[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid., p. 225.

made it impossible for traders, merchants and financiers, who made a living through commercial transactions rather than off the land, to prosper[196]:

"In the last Place. Trade is absolutely necessary for us, as our Country is very populous. It employs Multitudes of Hands both by Sea and Land, and furnishes the poorest of our Fellow-Subjects with the Opportunities of gaining an honest Livelihood. The Skilful of Industrious find their Account in it: And many, who have no fixed Property in the Soil of our Country, can make themselves Masters of considerable Estates, as those who have the greatest Portions of the Land descending to them by Inheritance. If what has been often charged upon us by our Neighbours has any Truth in it, That we are prone to Sedition and delight in Change, there is no cure more proper for this Evil than Trade, which thus supplies Business to the Active, and Wealth to the Indigent."[197]

The economic security and political stability that flowed from a smoothly operating commercial society provided Addison's readers with the opportunities required to cultivate the ease and worldliness essential for the acquisition of manners. When manners were combined with an awareness of correct Christian principles and virtue, *The Spectator* began to hint at what the full character of the polite citizen ought to be: a dutiful and worldly member of society, whose actions reflected the teachings of Christian conscience.

However there was a contradiction in Addisonian politeness between encouraging readers towards sociability, an ability to interact with one's peers for the sake of personal improvement and the welfare of society, and the need for each individual to embody what Peter France has called 'the Spectator ideal'. Sociability was essential for the regular operation of civilization; yet, the ideal Mr

[196] See ibid., note 5. Leheny remarks that Addison was replying here to a Tory concern that the "Money'd Interest', the traders, etc., earned a living off 'transient or imaginary property'. The Tories objected to the fact that these businessmen paid less tax than landowners.

Spectator was advised to remain sufficiently detached from society to protect himself from being tainted by the negative effects of commerce, i.e., greed, excessive luxury, pomposity or social rivalry.

The proper balance between sociability and individual improvement led to the identification of the ideal English Gentleman, who personified the active sober type of Ciceronian civic virtue that became the model for all to follow. This ideal polite citizen felt an equal commitment to self and social improvement, and reconciled any tensions between public and private interests by cultivating a type of Stoic detachment from the world. This detachment did not distract him from the regular performance of his duty.[198]

In *The Spectator* No. 2, Richard Steele introduced the fictional character of Sir Andrew Freeport to his readers, a rising Whig merchant who embodied many of the virtues *The Spectator* promoted. Sir Andrew was:

"... a Merchant of great Eminence in the City of London: A Person of indefatigable Industry, strong Reason, and great Experience. His Notions of Trade are noble and generous, and ... he calls the Sea the British Common. He is acquainted with Commerce in all of its Parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous Way to extend Dominion by Arms; for true Power is to be got by Arts and Industry. He will often argue, that if this Part of our Trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one Nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that Diligence makes more lasting Acquisitions than Valour, and that Sloth has ruin'd more Nations than the Sword. He abounds in several frugal Maxims, among which the greatest Favourite is, 'A Penny saved is a Penny got.' A General Trader of good Sense, is pleasanter Company than a general Scholar, and Sir ANDREW having a natural unaffected Eloquence, the

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[197] Ibid., pp. 225-26.

[198] For references to these points, see *The Spectator*, Nos. 1, 10, 12, 94 and 246 in Addison, Joseph and Steele, Richard, The Spectator, Vols. I-V, (ed.) Bond, D.F. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

Perspicuity of his Discourse gives the same Pleasure that Wit would in another Man. ..."[199]

Here is Steele's model 'commercial man', a sensible, frugal and well spoken person, who dealt with the world in practical terms. He lived by received codes of Christian conscience and morality, and was expected to strive for genuine virtue. Following the traditional Stoic formula that also appeared in Lipsius, however, the deepest manifestations of virtue were attainable only by a limited number of citizens. The path to genuine virtue involved degrees of self-denial, the absence of ambition and contributions to the public good that the ordinary person found difficult to achieve:

"... But those Men only are truly great, who place their Ambition rather in acquiring to themselves the Conscience of worthy Enterprizes, than in the Prospect of Glory which attends them. These exalted Spirits would rather be secretly the Authors of Events which are serviceable to Mankind, than without being such, to have the publick Fame of it. ..."[200]

By raising matters of conscience, morality and virtue, Steele alluded to the deeper foundations upon which politeness was built. This returns readers to a consideration of the more profound motivations Addison shared with La Bruyère to underscore polite morality with the authority of Christianity.[201] Addison

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[199] Steele, Richard, *The Spectator,* No. 2 in ibid., Vol. I, p. 10.
[200] Steele, Richard, *The Spectator,* No. 172 in ibid., Vol. II, p. 180.
[201] Steele seemed to agree that some form of Divine constraint was necessary to encourage purer forms of correct behavior. See *The Spectator,* no. 202, in ibid., Vol. ii. p. 292: "It is not only paying Wages, and giving commands, that Constitutes a Master of a Family; but Prudence, equal Behaviour, with readiness to Protect and Cherish them, is what entitles a Man to that Character in their very Hearts and Sentiments. ... A Man will have his Servant just, diligent, sober, and chaste, for no other Reasons but the Terrour of losing his Master's Favour; when all the Laws Divine and Humane cannot keep him whom he serves within Bounds with Relation to any one of those Virtues. But both in great and ordinary Affairs, all Superiority which is not founded on merit and Virtue, is supported only by Artifice and Stratagem."

believed that through the powers of Divine grace, human beings were capable of overcoming innate weakness to restore or raise themselves to higher levels of morality after times of trial.

The entire process of cultivating politeness depended on God's power to encourage humanity to good, and each human being's personal faculties of self-improvement. Addison believed that despite the Fall of Adam, human beings were never "... so sunk in vice and ignorance ..." as to be abandoned by God. Therefore, "... there [were] still some hidden seeds of goodness and knowledge in him."[202] These seeds required constant attention to develop, which came in the form of objective, humble and pious self-assessment.

This process of self-assessment fueled "... wholesome moral growth."[203] Reverence for the Divine encouraged individuals to recognise their personal role in the Providential order, which in turn fostered a sense of affiliation among human beings across society. Consequently the 'whole man', in Addisonian terms, was incapable of disassociating his private interests from his public obligations. The connections between private and public interests were now underscored by social, moral and religious imperatives.[204] Edward and Lillian Bloom neatly summarized the significance of connections Addison made

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[202] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator,* No. 262, quoted in Bloom, Edward A. and Lillian D., Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal in the market place, on the Hustings, in the pulpit (Providence: Brown University Press, 1971), p. 4.
[203] Ibid.
[204] The Blooms make the important point that Addison's belief in man as a sociable animal was not entirely positive. Ultimately man was sociable because he was fundamentally 'incapable of self-sufficiency.'

between the private and public worlds and between earthly and Divine considerations:

"Addison would not - indeed, could not - compartmentalize his views of the world in which in lived. His standards of behaviour are grounded in convictions that adjust a Calvinist-like mortality to Augustan common sense, reason, and pragmatic need. His ethic is directed to the literate whole … . Animating his ethic is a spirit of calculated, necessity-driven benevolence. And it is this spirit as much as anything else that unifies his concern with the diversities of politeness, economic law, Whiggism, and rational piety."[205]

Addison attempted to treat the deepest elements of commercial culture, while highlighting a continued role for grace in life and rational speculation that contributed to the cultivation of progress in society. Unlike Hume, whose world view left modern man dependent on sentiments and passions, and frequently disturbed by self-doubt, Addison wrote reassuringly of contemplation leading to "… a Discovery of the secret and amazing Steps of Providence, from the Beginning to the End of time."[206] If one considered the enlarged future state of heaven, the value of contemplating life in its broadest and fullest scope became clear. In other words, it was important that the contemplation and continual self-assessment referred to above was conducted with a view towards eternal salvation. However, "The Business of Mankind in this Life," Addison suggested, as "to act" … rather … "than to know."[207]

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[205] Bloom, Edward A. and Lillian D., Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal in the market place, on the Hustings, in the pulpit, p. 7.
[206] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator,* No. 237 in Addison, Joseph, and Steele, Richard, The Spectator, (ed.) Bond. D.F., Vol. II, p. 420.
[207] Ibid., p. 421.

Addison on Problems of Philosophy, Religion and Speculation

To the extent that philosophy promoted speculation which characterised the examined life, Addison wished to bring philosophy into the polite social domain through conversation in the coffee houses and salons of Britain. The transition of philosophy from the academy to the social sphere immediately focussed attention on philosophy's utility in promoting politeness. This utility gave philosophy a practical value that ordinary citizens could appreciate.

However Addison also expressed concerns about 'the promiscuous distribution of good and evil' in speculation.[208] The benefits of reflection depended on the process of speculation serving useful ends in life. It was important to avoid an overly cerebral form of speculation that put philosophy and reflection beyond the grasp of most ordinary members of commercial society. It was also important for Addison's readers to appreciate the Stoic rule that useful lessons in life often proceeded from painful experiences, which strengthened character.

To illustrate this point Addison referred to Seneca, who "... takes Pains, after the Doctrine of the Stoicks, to shew, that Adversity is not in itself an Evil; and mentions a noble Saying of *Demetrius,* That *nothing wou'd be more Unhappy than a Man who had never known Affliction.*"[209] To clarify the relationship between speculation, action and the struggle for virtue, Addison compared

[208] Ibid., p. 420.
[209] Ibid., p. 422.

prosperity with the mother of an indulgent child and pain as a Divine father, who taught fortitude through trial and labour.[210] Addison's use of Stoic examples to illustrate his points was effective, but one should remain sensitive to the precise form of Stoicism Addison recommended to cultivate morality.

According to *The Spectator,* there was a danger of pedantry in Stoicism, a "Pedantry of Virtue,"[211] by which Addison referred to the overly cerebral form of Stoicism that was too detached from common life to be useful to the polite citizen. Lost in a world of endless contemplation, the pedantic Stoic rendered himself incapable of making practical contributions to society, thereby becoming 'a very indifferent companion'.[212] In Addison's view, the Greek Stoic definition of excellence in virtue resting in a perfectly detached state of non-emotion was contrary to human improvement because man, by definition, was incapable of complete perfection. A pedantic Stoicism made one unsociable. However, the quest for virtue, the striving for perfection in the image of one's Maker, was not futile. Laudable species of virtue like devotion, temperance, faith and abstinence served society less well than justice and charity, but these inferior forms of virtue were useful and deserved recognition. The 'two great ornaments of virtue, good nature and cheerfulness' arose from the nexus of all forms of virtue present in society.

Richard Steele took up the notion of the pedantic Stoic in *Spectator* No. 274, but referred positively in No. 312 to Stoicism's discourse on pain, particularly the

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[210] Ibid., p. 422.
[211] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator* No. 243 in ibid., p. 444.

notion that pain was not evil. Steele's great objection to Stoicism was its lack of compassion. Compassion, like grace, civilised human nature and stifled indifference in society. The indolence exhibited by the pedantic Stoic ran contrary to the "... pleasing anguish and generous sympathy ..." that united all human beings.[213]

Steele, like Addison, resented the arrogance of Greek Stoicism's perfected form of virtue, with its implicit suggestion of the possibility of a human metamorphosis into divine entity. Again the notion that man could reach such lofty heights offended *The Spectator's* sensibilities, invoking an almost Augustinian degree of hostility to the idea. Insofar as imitation of God fueled improvement, *The Spectator* encouraged imitation though it was naturally constrained by man's inferior capabilities, and, perhaps more importantly, by his limited ability to form an image of God. Furthermore, the Stoic over-restraint of passions led to their extinction, which was tantamount to "... putting out the Light of the Soul ... ."[214]

In *The Spectator's* representation of Marcus Aurelius readers found a man who embodied a warmer, practical, balanced Stoicism that was conducive to refinement and social intercourse. Aurelius was an active man and a philosopher, cognizant of his limitations but at ease with himself. Through a modest and pious

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[212] See *The Spectator* No. 105.

[213] Steele, Richard, *The Spectator* No. 397 in Bond, D.F., The Spectator, Vol. III, p. 486. Steele continued concerning poetry: "Those who have laid down the Rules for Rhetorick or Poetry, advise the Writer to work himself up, if possible, to the pitch of Sorrow which he endeavours to produce in others. ... Grief has a natural Eloquence belonging to it, and breaks out in more moving Sentiments than can be supplied by the finest Imagination. Nature on this occasion dictates a thousand Passionate things which cannot be supplied by Art."

imitation of the gods and an economy of desires, Aurelius promoted an eminently desirable balance of temper emblematic of the kind of Stoicism polite citizens should emulate.[215]

Like the French Moralists, Addison made connections between imagination, sense, reason and faith to form a comprehensive understanding of politeness. Addison drew parallels between moral and aesthetic beauty, and the manner in which different forms of beauty were recognised by the senses. Beauty in its different moral or aesthetic forms triggered the imagination into action. Through imagining and reasoning, the beauty or truth of particular polite ideas or values was confirmed. Great degrees of pleasure were derived from recognizing truths in this way, just as one enjoyed an aesthetically pleasing work of art.

Concerning imagination and pleasure, Addison stated that human beings could not:

"... assign the necessary cause of this pleasure, because we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the substance of a human soul, ... therefore, for want of such a light, all we can do in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on those operations of the soul that are more agreeable, ... and ..., what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind."[216]

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[214] See *The Spectator* No. 408 in ibid., p. 526.
[215] Tickell, *The Spectator* No. 634 in Bond, D.F., The Spectator, Vol. V, p. 168: "Marcus Aurelius being afterwards asked to explain himself, declares, That, by imitating the Gods, he endeavours to imitate them in the Use of his Understanding, and of all other Faculties, and, in particular, That it was always his Study to have as few Wants as possible in himself, and to do all the Good he could to others. ... Among the many Methods by which Revealed Religion has advanced Morality, this is one, That it has given us a more just and perfect Idea of that Being who every reasonable Creature ought to imitate."
[216] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator,* No. 413 quoted in Bond, D.F., Critical Essays from The Spectator, p. 181.

Addison suggested that because the Supreme Author formed the soul for human happiness, and that contemplation of God was a primary component of human happiness, contemplation of the great and boundless in art was tantamount to an act of praising God. Addison drew the historian into his discussion by saying that the talent of the historian was to "... lead us step by step into the several actions and events of history.[217] This process was gradual as with all types of refinement.

Addison limited the perimeters of imagination. It was a finite attribute; the human capability for understanding, on the other hand, was not necessarily limited because humans tried to comprehend the infinite through an innumerable quantity of mental exercises in life. Imagination was restricted by the brain's finite capacity for retain impressions: as ideas and impressions faded with the passing of time, human tended to lose frames of reference. It was because of this limited scope of imagination that people were unable to form a picture of God in their minds, or achieve the levels of perfection the ancient Stoics suggested. Addison concluded, then, that while human beings were theoretically capable of understanding the infinite nature of god and the universe, and by extension the intricate ties between knowledge, behaviour and action in polite society, the limitations on human imagination prevented human beings from ever completing this task. To ease any frustrations that might arise from man's inability to achieve perfection, Addison referred his readers to the blessings already granted by the Creator:

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[217] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator,* No. 420, in ibid., p. 202.

"... what an infinite advantage this faculty [imagination] gives an Almighty Being over the soul of man, and how great a measure of happiness or misery we are capable of receiving from the imagination only."[218]

Humanity was ultimately obliged to view life as Seneca recommended: a continual progress towards achieving degrees of virtue according to one's individual merit. It was sufficient and desirable in Addison's mind to think of politeness as contributing to this progress.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered the manner in which aspects of Continental discussion about the nature of society and human activity were translated into Scottish intellectual life by Gerschom Carmichael and Francis Hutcheson. The unique contributions Hutcheson made to incorporating Neostoicism into the study of moral philosophy in Scotland.

We have also seen that from the end of the seventeenth century, theories derived from the natural law tradition formed the context within which Scottish moral philosophy developed. The natural law tradition, Neostoicism and politeness, when taken together, constituted the foundation for eighteenth-century Scottish discussion of ethics and morality.

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[218] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator,* No. 421, in ibid., p. 207. If imagination was limited, then the tools that conveyed its fruits must be limited. The consequence of this will be discussed further in chapter 4 in relation to Addison's influence on Hugh Blair.

Part II

Stoic Themes in the Works of the Moderate Clergy of the Church of Scotland

Prologue

Building upon John Pocock and Caroline Robbins's[219] assertions that aspects of the intellectual history of Scottish Enlightenment be explored within a civic humanist paradigm, we have seen that it is part of the received tradition in current Scottish Enlightenment historiography that the natural jurisprudential legacy rooted in the work of Grotius and Pufendorf offers a rich and precise vantage point from which to understand elements of Scottish social thought. Knud Haakonssen, John Robertson and Nicholas Phillipson[220] among others have clarified how deeply Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, David Hume and their peers were influenced by the natural law traditions emanating from seventeenth-century Protestant legal thought.

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[219] Pocock, J.G.A., The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). See chapters 13-14; see also Pocock, J.G.A., Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Robbins, Caroline, The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), chapter 6.

[220] Haakonssen, Knud, Natural Law and Moral Philosophy, see the introduction and chapters 1 and 2; Robertson, John, The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985); Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Adam Smith as civic moralist' in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff,

A general consequence of these developments is the broad acceptance among Enlightenment historians that Enlightenment literati examined the nature of humanity and civilisation in historical and social terms. The civic republican and natural jurisprudential paradigms, added to that of scientism[221], opened numerous avenues for exploration of the philosophical and moral theories that underpinned eighteenth-century Scottish culture. However, the Scots, particularly ministers of the Church of Scotland[222] who counted among the literati, faced significant challenges in defining the practical application of philosophical theory to daily life. The historians, Richard Sher and John Dwyer, have shown[223] how the Scots confronted these difficulties through social or practical moralising, as Haakonssen has described it. According to Sher, this moralising is embodied in a type of enlightened Christian Stoicism, which he defines as the 'private virtue' that guides the human conscience and social action.[224] Among the Moderate clergy, the Rev. Hugh Blair was its greatest exponent.

The appeal of Stoicism to the Moderate clergy, and Enlightenment literati generally, is an area of increasing interest to British historians, particularly those investigating how Stoic themes contributed to the identification of a

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Michael (eds), Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, pp. 179-202.

[221] See particularly Emerson, Robert, 'Science and the origins and concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment', *History of Science,* 26 (1988); and Emerson, Roger, 'Natural philosophy and the problem of the Scottish Enlightenment', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century,* 242 (1986).

[222] Members of the Moderate Clergy of the Church of Scotland including William Robertson, Hugh Blair, John Home (1722-1808), John Drysdale, Adam Ferguson (1723-1816) and Alexander Carlyle (1722-1805).

[223] Dwyer, John, Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987); and Dwyer, John, 'Clio and ethics: Practical morality in enlightened Scotland', *The Eighteenth Century,* 30 (1989).

[224] Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), chapter 5.

comprehensive Enlightenment understanding of human identity and activity. M.A. Stewart[225] has traced Stoic influences upon the 'early Enlightenment' focussing on the writings of Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull.[226] Their search reflected the Stoic quest for harmonious unity in action and identity.

By the 1750s the Edinburgh literati's attempts to define the moral life of commercial society were permeated with references to Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, as were their political, economic, and scientific works. The accumulation of wealth became acceptable in Scottish society to an unprecedented degree, and the social refinement that accompanied it became a hallmark of the modern age. Blair, William Robertson, Adam Smith, John Millar and numerous others relied upon a Stoic vocabulary both to define moral life within this context and to explore the social institutions that safeguarded it. It fell to ministers like Blair and Robertson to assert Christianity's role in the commercial world order, and to define how the Church of Scotland provided a moral bulwark against corruption or licentiousness in commercial society.

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[225] See Stewart, M.A., 'The Stoic legacy in the early Scottish Enlightenment', in Osler, Margaret (ed.), Atoms, pneuma, and tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[226] See Part III for discussion of Francis Hutcheson's interest in Stoicism and its relationship to his interest in Samuel Clarke's exploration of the practical applications of theological inquiry to daily life. In chapter 3, we saw that in Hutcheson's view, the average person could neither appreciate nor be served by the complex details of philosophical reasoning. Therefore Hutcheson proposed using the tools of natural science to cultivate a Christian science of man through exploration of a system of morals. Through this process, Hutcheson developed a theory of a moral sense, and moral distinctions arising from a moral sense, that were the foundation for the possibility of knowledge of good and evil non-contingent on knowledge of God. Blair seems to have accepted Hutcheson's belief that divine grace combined with the pursuit of the happiness of others was the key to moral goodness. In Hutcheson's system, virtue is sought for its own sake, arising from the belief that the products of the moral sense are ideas that stem from benevolent actions based on original perceptions. The ties between virtue, benevolence and perceptions are

This defence of Christianity and of the established Church occurred on a number of levels. It was crucial for the clergy to defend the positive benefits enjoyed through an enhanced commercial life because they highlighted the fruits of union between Scotland and England. In solidifying the moral base of commercial society, the Church played a key role not only in securing support for the Union of 1707, but in securing its own position within the young British nation. As Sher has argued, it was important to strengthen loyalty and obedience to the established order by drawing the individual citizen, or believer, into social and political discussion. By incorporating traditional Christian values with the polite ethics of commercial culture, the clergy outlined how private and public Christian obligations mingled. They also demonstrated how such a mingling contributed both to individual prosperity and to the good of civil society. Their encouragement of self-discipline, temperance and social responsibility assisted them in conveying their multiple, moral messages.

The purpose of this section is to explore how this mingling occurred by examining Stoic themes appearing in the sermons of Hugh Blair and in William Robertson's An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients had of India. The section will highlight Blair's emphasis of individual virtue, as well as Robertson's great interest in the virtues of the Brahmin caste in India and the role Providence plays in history.

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intended by God. Because the moral sense is universal, virtue is universally attainable, but Hutcheson acknowledged that deficiencies may arise within sense.

Chapter 4

Blair's Christian Stoic or Virtue Personified

Introduction

Despite the fact that he is best remembered as a literary critic and the first Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh,[227] Hugh Blair enjoyed unparalleled success as the Moderate clergy's leading proponent of Christian Stoicism after Francis Hutcheson.

Blair was born in Edinburgh on 7 April 1718, a scion of the Blairs of Blair. His father, also Hugh and once Merchant Burgess of Edinburgh and Dean of Guild, served in excise after losing his fortune through misguided investment. The young Blair's extended relations included numerous men of the church. His great-grandfather, Robert Blair, was a leading Covenanter. His uncle, James Bannatyne, was a Presbyterian minister of Trinity Church, Edinburgh, and Robert Blair the younger, was a published poet and Presbyterian cleric. It was at the instigation of Bannatyne, who approved of its classical curriculum, that Blair enrolled at the High School of Edinburgh with a view to entering university and taking the cloth.

Blair graduated MA from Edinburgh University on 23 February 1739, after the successful submission of a thesis on natural law.[228] According to his biographer, John Hill, Blair came under the particular influence of Professor John Stevenson in his fourth year at university, whose logic course Blair followed assiduously.[229] This would have included lectures on the relationship between natural law and religion. Stevenson also read frequently from *The Spectator*, which he used as a preferred model of literary eloquence.

Blair's MA thesis, *De Fundamentis & Obligatione Legis Naturae,* "... exposed the sullen system of Hobbes ..." and demonstrated "... the first dawnings of that virtuous sensibility"[230] that characterised his later sermons. The thesis described how duty to God combined with benevolence formed the core of natural law. Following Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Blair argued that natural law understood in these terms formed an essential, and perhaps self-sufficient, method for living virtuously, leaving the question of Christianity's superiority over the natural law open. However, in the conclusion to his thesis, Blair stated that Christianity played a similar role to natural law in the promotion of duty and benevolence,

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[227] The Edinburgh Town Council approved the Royal Commission's nomination of Blair as Regius Professor on 27 April 1762. Blair began lecturing at the University of Edinburgh in composition in 1759 and was promoted to professor of rhetoric in 1760.

[228] See Hill, John, An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, D.D. F.R.S.E. (Edinburgh: Printed by J. Bannatyne & Co. for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand, London. William Creech, and Manners and Miller, Edinburgh, 1807), pp. 14-16.

[229] Robertson, Carlyle and John Witherspoon also attended Stevenson's lectures, and although Carlyle later commented that Stevenson "had no pretensions to superiority in point of learning or genius, ..." he was "the most popular of all the professors on account of his civility and ... kindness." [See Carlyle, Alexander, Autobiography, (ed.) Burton, John Hill (Bristol: Thoemmes Antiquarian Books, Ltd., 1990), p. 47.]

[230] See Hill, John, An Account of the Life and Writings of Hugh Blair, D.D. F.R.S.E., pp. 15-16.

and enjoyed a unique advantage over natural law in guaranteeing the virtuous a place in the hereafter.[231]

Blair was licensed as a minister of the church on 21 October 1741 by the Presbytery of Edinburgh. He secured his first parish at Collessie in Fife through the good offices of Lady Leven, whose husband Lord Leven was a local landowner. Though he recognised the significance of the Leven patronage, a country living did not suit Blair's ambitions and he actively sought translation to an Edinburgh parish. He succeeded in being called to the Canongate Church by mid-summer 1743. From this vantage point, Blair carefully advanced his career culminating in his appointment to St. Giles, the High Kirk, in 1758.[232]

The considerable success Blair enjoyed in the church, and indeed as professor, apparently owned nothing to his skills of oratory. Yet the substance of Blair's works tended to be well received in polite society, particularly the sermons he preached from the High Church pulpit. The pulpit was the most effective place from which to encourage private virtue, and the most effective means of dispensing moral guidance rested in the jeremiad-style of preaching traditionally associated with the Calvinist church and the Scottish Presbyterian church of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. As Sher points out, the jeremiad was a didactic style of preaching that relied heavily on threat of divine retribution for personal licentiousness or social corruption. Any decline in public

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[231] See Blair, Hugh, *De Fundamentis & Obligatione Legis Naturae* (Edinburgh University thesis, 1739), p. 11: "... *doctrinam vero Christianam, hanc legem cum illustrare, tum certiore spe, nos ad eam colendam allicere, hominis erit Christianam Religionem minime spernentis, Naturaeque Legen suis laudibus amplificantis, oratio.*"

or private morality resulted in God's punishment, which was particularly harsh when administered to those covenanted to Him.[233] And as Sher indicates, the power of the jeremiad stemmed from its Calvinist rooting in a Providentially-based interpretation of life and history.[234]

The jeremiad was often used to explain national disasters by placing them in a providential context. Sher discusses, for example, how the jeremiad was used by Blair and other among the Scottish clergy to address the divisive legacy of the Battle of Culloden (1745). The horrors of death and division inflicted upon the Scots as Jacobite fought Hanoverian were the punishments of an angry God. Yet in true Calvinist fashion, God's will remained supreme, and useful lessons learned through suffering focussed upon acceptance of his will.[235] The fact that Blair, and many other Moderate ministers, depended heavily upon a Stoic vocabulary to convey their moral messages is the matter of immediate interest here.

Throughout his Sermons,[236] Blair provided clear and concise guidance about the practical matters of daily living, remaining aware of the inevitable temptations awaiting mankind in its fallen state. The benefits found in acceptance of a

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[232] See Schmidtz, Robert Morrel, Hugh Blair (Morningside Heights, NY: King's Crown Press, 1948), chapters 1-3, for supplementary references to the biographical paragraphs above.
[233] Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, p. 43.
[234] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
[235] See Hugh Blair's sermon, 'The Wrath of Man Praising God. A Sermon Preached in the High Church of Edinburgh, May 18, 1746', (Edinburgh, 1746).
[236] The first edition of Blair's Sermons was published by Creech, Strahan and Cadell, appearing in Edinburgh and London on 8 February and 15 April 1777 respectively. Because published sermons were often financial failures, Blair initially hesitated to publish an edition. He agreed after considerable prompting from Lord Kames. To Blair's delight, his Sermons were received enthusiastically by King George III, Queen Charlotte, and Dr. Jonson, (see Schmidtz, pp. 82-83)

Providentially-inspired world order and the cultivation of personal virtue are complimentary, and underscore a constancy of action that is the mainstay of conscience in Blair's estimation. However the full value of these benefits is only found when they are completed by Christian faith. As Sher has pointed out, Blair "... defined Christianity chiefly in terms of virtue or benevolence grounded in a faith in Christ."[237]

In offering his listeners these perspectives, Blair made no attempt to redress the charges made by critics who attacked the Moderate clergy for their lack of theological sophistication. As has been admirably demonstrated in the work of Ian D.L. Clark, and more recently by Sher, J. McIntosh and Steven Fratt,[238] the Moderates' lack of interest in theological expressions made them vulnerable in the eyes of orthodox clergy.[239] The Moderates remained loyal to the Westminster Confession of Faith while altering the ecclesiastical priorities of the Church of Scotland. Their encouragement of personal morality and responsibility within the framework of Christian Stoicism subsumed the Covenanting orthodoxy of a century earlier.

However if we view the Moderate clergy as moral instructors whose commitment to Christianity, at least in Blair's case, cannot be doubted, we will see that their

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[237] Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, p. 182.

[238] See Clark, I.D.L., Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805, (PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1964); Fratt, Steven D., Scottish Theological Trends in the 18th-Century, Tensions between 'Head' and 'Heart', (PhD thesis, University of California-Santa Barbara, 1988); McIntosh, J.R., The Popular Party in the Church of Scotland, 1740-1800, (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1989).

influence as spiritual guides remained uncompromised by their lack of interest in doctrine. Evidence of this is found in the immense popularity of Blair's sermons. By adopting the Senecan notion that the progress toward virtue was as valuable as its attainment, Blair and his Moderate colleagues acknowledged the permanent tension existing between the real and the ideal not only in practical but in religious life. The key challenge was to avoid the moral complacency that the Moderates' critics claimed would inevitably flow from such heterodoxical or even heretical interpretations of the nature of Christian life.

Through his Christian Stoic vocabulary, we will see how Blair illustrated and recommended the most significant attributes the virtuous Christian cultivated in order to live a Godly life. Providence remains at the centre of Blair's deliberations, particularly because it underpins a certain cosmic order in nature that provides a degree of harmony to an otherwise disordered world.[240] Virtue acts simultaneously as the moral repository of human kind and the sum of duties owed to other individuals and society. These duties, including patience, temperance and self-discipline, form the secondary level of virtue subsumed by the first. It is through the cultivation of these virtues, combined with those of

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[239] The Moderates' subscription to the Westminster Confession would seem to make them safely orthodox, particularly given the belief that religious truth had already received its full expression in the Westminster Confession. Nevertheless this did not satisfy critics.

[240] It is important to note that Blair adhered to the definition of Providence given in the Westminster Confession of Faith throughout his career. According to the Confession, within the realm of First Causes, God officiates through the fore-knowledge of time and history, providing a general thrust to causes and events. Christ as mediator operates in the domain of Second Causes. He recognises that we never overcome our fundamental fallibility in the earthly process of improvement, but offers a higher improvement through redemption. The dual plains upon which providence operates suit God's pleasure. Our inability to comprehend their mystery in its entirety does not suggest a triumph of weakness or evil. It simply proves the inseparable relationship between the world and providential authority, while underscoring the generosity of redemption. See Carruthers, S.W. (ed.), The Westminster Confession of Faith (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1978). Reprint of 1646 edition by Cornelius Burges. See chapter V, p. 7.

piety, charity and constancy, that Blair's Christians find deepest fulfillment as individuals and members of society.

Therefore we turn first to a discussion of the role virtue plays in the life of the individual Christian as Blair sees it, and explore the greater significance he gives to the cultivation of order in mind and society. We will then ask how virtue and order are complementary by constancy in faith and action, and where conscience fits into Blair's Christian Stoic paradigm. Blair often refers to the Old Testament Patriarch, Joseph, as an ideal model of the virtuous believer, so we will examine which characteristics Blair most prizes in Joseph. The chapter will continue with a discussion of how the virtues of charity and grace illustrate the uniquely Christian elements of Blair's Christian Stoicism. The concluding section will focus on Blair's use of sermons as social tools to persuade listeners of moral values, and the role he assigns to taste in processing moral messages. It is hoped that this avenue will permit further speculation about the precise nature of Blair's, and the Moderate's, twin commitment to Christian morality on the one hand and virtuous ethics on the other.

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Virtue and Order in Christian Life

Virtue plays a wide and varied role in Blair's sermons. Above all, as indicated, it is the moral repository of the mind and heart common to all human beings. "Genuine virtue", wrote Blair, "has a language that speaks to every heart throughout the world. It is a language which is understood by all. In every

region, every clime, the homage paid to it is the same. In no one sentiment were ever mankind more generally agreed."[241]

Virtue is also the key component in leading a dutiful Christian life; the essential element in containing the temptation of the world; and, the guardian of civil order and responsible civic action. These broad responsibilities which Blair assigns virtue depend upon the exercise of more specific virtues or duties in daily life, namely the traditional Christian virtues of patience, kindness, temperance, candour, fortitude, self-control and charity. Blair claims that religion:

"... adds to all the moral virtues a venerable and authoritative dignity. It renders the virtuous character more august. To the decorations of a palace it joins the majesty of a temple. He who divides religion from virtue, understands neither the one nor the other. It is the union of the two, which consummates the human character and state."[242]

Armed with appreciation if virtue's benefits on the one hand, and faith on the other, Blair's Christian is best equipped to weather the trials of the present world while fulfilling his or her moral and social obligations to God and humanity. However, Blair has no illusions about the complexity of the human character, hence his development of the theme that a disciplined progress towards personal virtuousness is the most realistic option in life. Blair returns time and again to the tension between this complexity of character and the Scots' constant search for unity of human thought, action and history.

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[241] Blair, Hugh, 'On the True Honour of Man', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 123. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1819).

Like Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, Blair urges his readers towards balance in perspective and action. Worldly endeavour must be balanced by contemplation, "If Uninterrupted intercourse with the world wear out a man of pleasure, it no less oppresses the man of business and ambition."[243] For Blair, the 'bustle of the world' is 'perpetual warfare', neither of which are conducive to the calm state of the heart that provides strength in adversity and the maintenance of order in mind and society. Like the Stoics Blair places ultimate value in order, be it the highest order of Providence itself or order in the poor man's home. For this reason, it is particularly important that in cultivating the most complete form of virtue, that complimented by piety, we avoid passions that lead to inner turmoil or disorder:

> "While we thus maintain a due dependence on God, let us also exert ourselves with care in acting our own part. ..., the happiness of every man depends more upon the state of his own mind, than upon any one external circumstance; nay, more than upon all external things put together. We have seen, that inordinate passions are the great disturbers of life; and that, unless we possess a good conscience, and a well-governed mind, discontent will blast every enjoyment, ... Fix then this conclusion in your minds, that the destruction of your virtue is the destruction of your peace."[244]

The deeper significances of order and its relation to the cultivation of virtue are examined in the lengthy sermon, 'On the Importance of Order in Conduct'.

Taking as his theme a quotation from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, "Let all things be done - in order" (I Corinthians xiv. 40.), Blair opens with the theme of order in religion. Religion is a "regular and well-conducted system, ... composed

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[242] Ibid., p. 125.
[243] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Motives to Constancy in Virtue', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 143.
[244] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Disorders of the Passions', in his Sermons, Vol. I, pp. 118-119.

of a variety of parts; each of which possesses its separate importance, and contributes to the perfection of the whole."[245] The variety of its parts falls into two groups, a first-tier level of grace essential to religion, and a second-tier level of moral duties that facilitate daily implementation of grace. The love of God, faith, repentance and the love of our fellow human being rank among the graces; regularity, method and order are the "other dispositions and habits, which though they hold not so high a rank, ... are necessary to the introduction and support ..."[246] of the graces. Blair intends to persuade his listeners both of the value of order, and of the moral duty to maintain order in life.

Blair's audience are polite men and women of the world, well acquainted with the temptations of affluence or luxury. The moral confusion, or disorder, that arises in daily life is only cleared through the methodical re-establishment of regularity in thought. For Blair, as for much of his audience, religion is the opposite of moral disorder. Therefore it is, in Blair's estimation, fair to say that "... order is friendly to religion.". The neglect of order "... coincides with vice, so the preservation of it must assist virtue. By the appointment of Providence, it is indispensably requisite to world prosperity. Thence arises a presumption, that it is connected also with spiritual improvement."[247]

If we see a friend's life in complete disorder, we fear for that person's harm or demise. It is reasonable to suspect that disorder in temporal affairs spills over into moral considerations, and it is here that the way to licentiousness opens. The

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[245] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Importance of Order in Conduct', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 282.
[246] Ibid.

Apostle Paul taught 'that God is not the author of confusion', and in this Christians find primary evidence of the value of order. Therefore Blair suggests, "Allow me to recommend to you, order in the conduct of your affairs; order in the distribution of your time; order in the management of your fortune; order in the regulation of your amusements; order in the arrangement of your society."[248]

Blair proceeds to outline the manner in which the need for order permeates the functioning of civilised societies. Order in life includes acceptance of the various ranks into which society is divided. The greater the level of responsibility a member of society has in their public and private endeavors, the greater is their need of order to fulfil their obligations. There is a direct corollary between the eminence of a person's station in life, and the amount of order that should be cultivated within that station. However, in fulfillment of duty which is requisite to a life of action, one must not lose sight of first duties owed to Providence. Temporal duties and order in life stem from Providential design, and it is only through Providence that the entire system of life and belief are completed. Thus order is simultaneously the foundation and guarantor of social and personal stability.

"He who conducts his affairs with method and regularity, meets every duty in its proper place, and assigns it its due rank. But where there is no order in conduct, there can be no uniformity in character."[249]

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[247] Ibid., pp. 282-283 for references for both quotations in this paragraph.
[248] Ibid., p. 283.
[249] Ibid., p. 285.

This uniformity is of particular significance in Blair's scheme, for it is only from a unity of mind that conscience fully operates. In the throes of life, especially when religious discipline lapses, "The authority of conscience may occasionally operate, when our situation affords it room for exertion. But in other circumstances of equal importance, every moral sentiment will be overpowered by the tumultuous bustle of worldly affairs."[250]

The focus of Blair's attention then shifts to a discussion of the specific ways in which disorder affects material life. He stresses the necessity of effective time management, thrift and economy in the home, and a disciplined approach to all financial affairs. These provide a bulwark against a loss of property or material security, chief sources of personal and social disharmony. It is the cultivation of a 'firmness of mind', another virtue, that sustains the ordered management of material concerns.

With Blair's listener now aware of the value of order and the integral framework it provides for the pursuit of virtue, we begin to see how important this Stoic-like language of religion is to Blair's Christian Stoic scheme. Order permits the fullest realisation of Christian duty both in the public and private domains, and through it the Providentially ordained structure of society is maintained. In avoiding idleness, a balanced pace of life is sustained by the individual members of society. Order underscores the uniformity that is the key component of a just society, and a peaceful mind. Of uniformity:

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[250] Ibid., p. 286.

"It is the parent of steadiness of conduct. It forms consistency of character. It is the ground of all the confidence we repose in one another. ... Order is the source of peace; and peace is the highest of all temporal blessings. ... Such as live according to order, may be compared to the celestial bodies, which move in regular courses, and by stated laws; whose influence is beneficent; whose operations are quiet and tranquil."[251]

Ultimately order "is the foundation of union. It allows every man to carry on his own affairs without disturbing his neighbor. It is the golden chain, which holds together the societies of men in friendship and peace. In fine, the man of order is connected with all the higher powers and principles in the universe. He is the follower of God. He walks with him, and acts upon his plan."[252] And it is by contrasting Christianity, which Blair refers to as the 'great discipline of order', with the disorder of evil, or Satan, that Blair offers his audience final proof of the fruits found in virtuous order.

By emphasizing the multifaceted role order plays in mind, heart and society, Blair reminds his listener of the analogous and contingent relationship that exists between the individual and society, and between private and public interest. In recommending the pursuit of a higher spiritual self-discipline and constant self-examination to his listeners, Blair places simultaneous demands upon them to act virtuously in private and public life while observing the dictates of Providence. He underscores the Enlightenment literati's belief that man's nature is essentially social, but that his soul remains ultimately dependent upon religion.

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[251] Ibid., pp. 296-297.
[252] Ibid., p. 297.

Order is the key to the successful cultivation of virtue in individual life: by extension that action personifies the efficient operation of society. Precisely how the benefits of personal virtue flow into society and vice versa remains somewhat unclear. There is something intangible in this sermon about the relationship between order and religion. This is perhaps to be expected given the spiritual purposes of Blair's sermons for it is ultimately on the highest plains of morality that they instruct. However, Blair addresses further how the more spiritual connections between religion and order are translated into the regular systems of life in his sermon, "On Candour". In it he stresses that government and religion form a combined foundation for religion in society.

> "Religion and Government are the two great foundations of order and comfort among mankind. Government restrains the outrages ... which would be subversive of society, secures the property, and defends the lives, of its subjects. But the defect of government is, that human laws can extend no farther than to the actions of men."[253]

Thus it is on the two foundations of religion and government that Blair bases personal and civic order: religion provides government for the soul and government administers the distributive justice without which society falters. We rightfully expect just treatment in our commercial and social transactions, indeed it is the most we can expect from our fellow human beings. Justice is best administered with candour and charity both on private and public levels. The virtues of candour and charity are held in great estimation by St. Paul, from whom Blair again takes inspiration for this sermon. Therefore a Christian looks to the virtues of candour and charity as essential elements in the even distribution

of justice. If Mandevillean suspicion or malice replace candour and charity in social transactions, we may expect the worst. Of a person who deals from suspicious motives, Blair warns:

"... As a companion, he will be severe and satirical; as a friend, captious and dangerous; in his domestic sphere, harsh, jealous, and irascible; in his civil capacity, seditious and turbulent, ... The contrary of all this may be expected from a candid temper. Whatever is amiable in manners, or useful in society, naturally and easily ingrafts itself upon it. ... It is the chief ground of mutual confidence and union among men. ... In the magistrate, it tempers justice and lenity. Among subjects, it promotes good order and submission. It connects humanity with piety."[254]

The primary focus of the discussion thus far has involved the virtues of this world, those Blair places on a secondary level to his definition of virtue as the moral repository of the human being. The ground upon which Blair bases his justification for the pursuit of virtue is tied directly to his understanding of the afterlife, and how Christians must ultimately concern themselves with proving worthy of salvation.

This departs from a strict parallelism with Stoic themes, although Blair's references to death reflect a Stoic-like submission to nature's and Providence's design for each person. In his advocacy of pursuing virtue in this world, Blair distances himself from Presbyterian notions of predestination in that virtue is accessible to all, just as Christianity is. We have seen that Blair's entire discussion of achieving a completed form of virtue, at the individual level or in society, depends upon faith. Blair ends his sermon on constancy in virtue with a

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[253] Blair, Hugh, 'On Candour', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 3.

discussion about the afterlife, and we must examine this, combined with sections of his sermon on the imperfect knowledge of a future state, to understand the full implications of having Christianity complete earthly virtue.

From the earliest stages of human development, according to Blair, religion complemented nature by tying humanity's historical development to spiritual progress. Providence placed a sense of a future life in the human heart, which sustains us in adversity and fuels attempts to prove worthy of final reward. This is the impetus for achieving the deepest possible levels of virtuousness while combining action and spiritual reflection:

"Consider the nature and circumstances of man. Introduced into the world in an indigent condition, he is supported at first by the care of others; and, as soon as he begins to act for himself, finds labour and industry to be necessary for sustaining his life, and supplying his wants. Mutual defence and interest gives rise to society; and society, when formed, requires distinctions of property, diversity of conditions, subordinations of ranks, and a multiplicity of occupations, in order to advance the general good."[255]

It is the unavoidable consequence of living with life's trials, Blair points out in the sermon on constancy, that frustration arises when sustained virtuous activity brings no noticeable reward in daily life. This is equally true in spiritual life. Blair replies with the familiar theme from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians 6:9, "In due season you shall reap, if you faint no. … As this great principle of faith is

[254] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[255] Blair, Hugh, 'On Our Imperfect Knowledge of a Future State', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 55.

so essential to our present argument, and is indeed the foundation of all religion, it will be proper that we now take a view of the grounds on which it rests."[256]

The first evidence of a higher reward found in afterlife stems from the fact that despite the advantages of virtue, human happiness is usually left incomplete in life. Those conscientious members of society, who have a right to happiness, often 'suffer for the sake of virtue' without attaining the reward they deserve. 'Vicious' members of society, who act selfishly with little or no regard for their neighbors, often 'possess advantages' in the world: they scheme, connive and manipulate their way toward a given end. This should not, in Blair's view, distract virtuous persons from doing good. It was imperative that people maintain high standards of behaviour, which, in turn, testified to their sound moral character:

"... it cannot be denied, that the happiness of good men is often left incomplete. The vicious possess advantages, to which they have no right; while the conscientious suffer for the sake of virtue; and groan under distresses which they have not merited ... . Indeed, were the distribution of good and evil, in this life, altogether promiscuous; could it be said with truth, that the moral condition of men had no influence whatever upon their happiness or misery; I admit, that from such a state of things, no presumption would arise of any future retribution being intended. They who delight to aggravate the miseries of life, and the distresses of virtue, do no service to the argument in behalf of Providence."[257]

However unequal distributions of good and evil in life do not go unnoticed by Providence, and Christianity explains them as preparations for future reward.

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[256] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Motives to Constancy in Virtue', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 272.
[257] Ibid., pp. 272-73.

Because of this good and evil proportioned as they are in the world are part of a deeper Providential order:

"If he who rules the universe, entirely neglects virtue here, the probability must be very small of his rewarding it hereafter. But this is far from being the true state of the fact. What human life presents to the view of an impartial observer, is by no means a scene of entire confusion; but a state of order, begun and carried on a certain length. Virtue so far from being neglected by the Governour of the world, that from many evident marks it appears to be a chief object of his care."[258] Furthermore, "In the constitution of human nature, a foundation is laid, for comfort to the righteous, and for internal punishment of the wicked. Throughout the course of divine government, tendencies toward the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other, constantly appear. They are so conspicuous, as not to have escaped the notice of the rudest nations. Over the whole earth they have diffused the belief, that Providence is propitious to virtue, and averse to guilt. Yet these tendencies are, sometimes, disappointed of their effect, and that which Providence visibly favours, is left, at present, without an adequate reward."[259]

In a word, Providence's business in this world is unfinished, Blair suggests to his listeners. It is very virtuous Christian's duty to persevere:

"Man, fallen from his primaeval felicity, is now undergoing probation and discipline for his final state. Divine justice remains, for a season, concealed; and allows men to act their parts with freedom on this theatre, that their characters may be formed and ascertained. Amidst discouragements and afflictions, the righteous give proof of their fidelity, and acquire the habits of virtue. But if you suppose the events of this life to have no reference to another, the whole state of man becomes not only inexplicable, but contradictory and inconsistent."[260]

Blair's second method of proving that a future state exists draws from his belief that anticipations of it are naturally rooted in human sentiments. In that these are

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[258] Ibid., p. 273.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid., pp. 274-75.

common to all human beings, all nations share a feeling or presentment that a just Deity will reward earthly virtuousness and obedience:

"Throughout all ages, and among all nations, the persuasion of a future life has prevailed. It springs` not from the refinements of science, or the speculations of philosophy; but from a deeper and stronger root, the natural sentiments of the human heart. Hence it is common to the philosopher and the savage; and is found in the most barbarous, as well as in the most civilised regions. Even the belief of the being of a God, is not more general on the earth than the belief in immortality."[261]

Blair concludes the sermon with an optimistic emphasis of the virtue of hope suggesting:

"The virtuous are supported by hope, the guilty tormented with the dread, of what is to take place after death. As death approaches, the hopes of the one, and the fears of the other, are found to redouble. The soul, when issuing hence, seems more clearly to discern its future abode. All the operations of conscience proceed upon the belief of immortality. The whole moral conduct of men refers to it. All legislators have supposed it. All religions are built upon it. It is so essential to the order of society, that, were it erased, human laws would prove ineffectual restraints from evil, and a deluge of crimes and miseries would overflow the earth."[262]

The ultimate foundation for maintaining hope, which is the essence of Christianity as Blair presents it, is the resurrection of Christ. Blair concludes this sermon by arguing for the future life based upon Gospel evidence of the tie between Christ's resurrection and a future life. The lesson ends, "Thus, upon the whole, whether you consult your reason, or listen to the discoveries of revelation, you behold our argument confirmed; you behold a life of piety and virtue issuing

[261] Ibid., p. 276.
[262] Ibid., p. 277.

in immortal felicity."[263] The cultivation of virtue and piety, therefore, assure a solid integrity, which is sustained by a constancy in action and faith.

ii

Joseph as Blair's Virtuous Hero

In his embodiment of the virtues of constancy, self-reliance and adherence to duty, Blair recommends the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph, to his listeners. In several sermons, Joseph is presented as a unique historical and religious figure, whose fidelity, integrity and prudence permit him to look "... beyond all second causes; and recognises, in the wonderful events of his life, the hand of the Almighty.--No human character exhibited in the records of Scripture, is more remarkable and instructive than that of this patriarch."[264]

It is Joseph's complete trust in and obedience to Providence that enhances his virtuousness. For the Stoics and Blair, as we have seen, the virtuous person is one who learns to accept his or her inability to control the greatest issues of existence that play themselves out at the highest level of divine consciousness, and Joseph falls perfectly into this paradigm. In a manner of speaking, this level of predestination mirrors first causes. The circumstances over which one must triumph on a daily basis, for the Stoics those of which we become free by realising their insignificance, seem to parallel second causes. Within the realm of first causes, the Stoics and Blair agree that humanity is unequipped to alter the

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[263] Ibid., pp. 279-80.
[264] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Character of Joseph', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 21.

course of nature or the Divine plan. Second causes permit us to exercise free will within a circumscribed framework. In both systems, destiny prevails: destiny determined by God as a consequence of his love for his children, or by nature through her beneficence.

Despite a seemingly limitless catalogue of misfortunes befalling Joseph, from being sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers to fielding attacks from courtiers as Pharaoh's protégé, the patriarch never swerves from his faith in God's deliverance. He accepts his destiny with a calmness of spirit that Blair admires greatly. In concentrating on the realm of first causes over second ones, that is to say detaching himself from worldly concerns and submitting to Providential design, Joseph not only respects God's will, but finds it possible to forgive his brothers' treachery.

How does Blair explain Joseph's heroic obedience? In Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers, Blair suggests we find a perfect manifestation of the blendings of piety and action to which Christians must aspire. The grace Joseph receives through his faith marks him out as a child of Providence, and grace sustains the devoutness that remains with Joseph throughout his life:

"Contemplating the hand of God in all that had befallen him, he effaced the remembrance of those evil deeds which had produced his adversity; and for his prosperity he affected no praise to himself, but ascribed it entirely to the will of Heaven. Let us take notice that this is not the reflection of a private retired man, whose situation might be supposed to favour such devout meditations: it is the reflection of one, who was leading a busy … life, in the midst of a court; the favourite of the greatest monarch who was then known to the world. Yet him you behold, amidst the submission and adulation which was paid to him, preserving the moderation and simplicity of a virtuous mind; and amidst the

idolatry and false philosophy of the Egyptians, maintaining the principles of true religion, ..."[265]

It is from Joseph's mingling of piety with his essential humanity that Blair's moral instruction from the sermon on Joseph's character comes:

"... a devout regard to the hand of God in the various events of life, tends to promote good dispositions and affections towards men. It will be found by those who attend to the workings of human nature; that a great proportion of those malignant passions which break out in the intercourse of men, arises from confining their attention wholly to second causes, and overlooking the first cause of all."[266]

Turning to Blair's sermon, "On the Power of Conscience", we find further evidence of Joseph's virtuousness although it becomes somewhat flawed vis-à-vis the functioning of conscience. The sermon focusses on the relationship between guilt and conscience with particular reference to Joseph's brothers after they sold the Patriarch into slavery. Unusually Blair opens the sermon by listing the crucial lessons from the story of Jacob's sons:

"I. That a sense of right and wrong in conduct, or of moral good and evil, belongs to human nature.
II. That it produces an apprehension of merited punishment, when we have committed evil.
III. That although this inward sentiment be stifled during the season of prosperity, yet in adversity it will revive. And,
IV. That when it revives, it determines us to consider every distress which we suffer, from what cause soever it has arisen, as an actual infliction of punishment by Heaven."[267]

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[265] Ibid., p. 33.
[266] Ibid.
[267] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Power of Conscience', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 227.

This leaves the listener several avenues to explore. Blair explains in passages immediately following this introduction that conscience is a 'faculty', and that it is a 'sense of moral good and evil' stemming from a 'law written in our hearts' inspired by God.[268] In order to function at its full capacity conscience requires divine assistance. This becomes particularly clear after the time of Christ's appearance when the full weight of revelation is measured. Joseph and his siblings lived in an age, "... when the law was not yet given, when no external revelation of the Divine will subsisted, except what had been handed down among the patriarchs ... ." This formed an ancient law written in human hearts that had considerable value as a "... foundation of the mutual trust which the transactions of life require; ...", but "Such sentiments are coëval with human nature."[269] They are incomplete.

Like Calvin, Blair is suggesting that conscience, devoid of the full guidance of revelation, is not a sufficient power to regulate life on the deepest levels. Despite his considerable virtues and his heroic obedience to Providence, Joseph is morally limited by his 'corrupted state' as are his brothers. This is the level of conscience found in natural religion and "... is both too general to afford ... full

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[268] Blair's understanding of the moral sense is essentially Hutchesonian, and Blair clearly follows Hutcheson's proposal to use the tools of natural science to cultivate a Christian science of man through exploration of a system of morals. Through this process, Hutcheson developed his theory of the moral sense, and moral distinctions arising from a moral sense, that were the foundation for the possibility of knowledge of good and evil non-contingent on knowledge of God. Blair seems to have accepted Hutcheson's belief that divine grace combined with the pursuit of the happiness was the key to moral goodness, however her questioned Hutcheson's notion that the happiness of others took precedence over personal happiness. (See Blair's review of Francis Hutcheson's System of Moral Philosophy, *Edinburgh Review,* Vol. I, 1755, pp. 15-16.) In Hutcheson's system, virtue is sought for its own sake, arising from the belief that the products of the moral sense are ideas that stem from benevolent actions based on original perceptions. The ties among virtue, benevolence and perceptions are intended by God. Because the moral sense is universal as we saw in chapter 3, virtue is universally attainable, but Hutcheson acknowledged that deficiencies may arise within sense.

direction in conduct, and too feeble to withstand contrary principles in … nature. It is often perverted by ignorance and superstition; it is too easily overcome by passion and desire. Hence the importance of that divine revelation, which communicates both light and strength; … ."[270] Through revelation humanity is placed in a 'higher station' than that where the 'mere light of Nature' places them.

However just as revelation completes our natural sense of good and evil, we must have this sense in order to receive revelation. If human beings were devoid of this sense, we would be 'incapable' of receiving the message of revelation:

"… Nay, unless men were endowed by nature with some sense of duty or of moral obligation, they could reap no benefit from revelation; they would remain incapable of all religion whatever."[271]

Therefore conscience is operating on a number of levels in Blair's scheme. It is described as a faculty and a sense. It is limited in its regulatory scope by the fact that conscience as it is operating in the Old Testament is not yet completed by revelation. Yet is serves a crucial function in paving the way for human beings to receive revelation and regulates behaviour within the realm of second causes. Senses of duty, gratitude and allegiance, all of which stem from conscience as it is operating in Joseph's time, preclude receipt of revelation:

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[269] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Power of Conscience', in his Sermons, Vol. I, pp. 227-28.
[270] Ibid., p. 228 for references for this paragraph.
[271] Ibid., p. 229.

"They who, from a mistaken zeal for the honour of Divine revelation, either deny the existence, or vilify the authority of natural religion, are not aware, that by disallowing the sense of obligation, they undermine the foundation on which revelation builds its power of commanding the heart."[272]

The effects of conscience are the same within natural and revealed religion. The 'great tool of conscience', remorse, works away on the minds of those who commit injustice. And it is in describing the guilt that prompted Joseph's brothers to admit their treachery that Blair gives the final lessons of this sermon. For all of its complexity, conscience remains constant in life and in the world just as constancy in action is the mainstay of conscience.

Conscience functions evenly regardless of degrees of prosperity or adversity. Blair tells his listeners:

"By prosperity, God gives scope to our passions, and makes trial of our dispositions. By adversity, he revives the serious principle within. Neither the one, nor the other, could be borne entire and unmixed."[273]

Revelation verifies conscience, and all conscious action occurs within a Providential framework:

"Natural and revealed religion proceed from the same Author; and of course, are analogous and consistent. They are part of the same plan of Providence. They are connected measures of the same system of government."[274]

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[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid., p. 236.
[274] Ibid., p. 244.

iii

The Problem of Grace

Grace and charity remain the fundamental areas of theological difficulty which the Moderate clergy faced in their advocacy of private virtue or Christian Stoicism. Neither grace nor charity fit comfortably into the vocabulary of Stoicism, although on occasion the Stoics recommended acts of mercy or the granting of favours.[275] We know that the Stoic seeks the perfected use of reason in all transactions of life, removed from the influence of external matters or entities. Grace understood as divine inspiration that fuels faith was alien to Stoic cosmology. It is with the incorporation of grace into Blair's Christian Stoic paradigm that tensions arise between its constituent elements.

Because Blair's understanding of grace proceeds from the Westminster Confession, which in turn adopted the spirit of Calvin's definition of grace as its guide, we must recall briefly the role grace plays in Calvin's theology. From the Augustinian tradition, Calvin inherited the theological challenge of defining how believers could be assured of God's mercy or grace. For Augustine grace was essentially a gift of the Holy Spirit, an infusion of God's love into the soul of the believer that directed actions of the will. Grace tempered selfishness and malicious action of fallen humanity; helped to bridge the gap between God and fallen humanity; fuelled love of God and neighbor; and, allowed a believer to

[275] See Seneca, 'On Mercy' and 'On Favours' in Seneca, Moral and Political Essays, (eds) Cooper, John and Procopé, J.F.

appreciate more fully the beneficence of his Creator. Grace provided the ultimate source of hope for salvation.

Calvin embraced the Augustinian understanding of grace, as meaning essentially the work God undertakes for humankind through the death of Christ.[276] Justification by faith in Christ became the means through which Calvin emphasises the importance of sanctification. Through sanctification a believer confirms prior assurance of divine mercy but he must not permit that confirmation to become the bedrock of his belief. Randall Zachman has recently argued that changing definitions of grace had profound theological effects in Reformed societies in that conscience superseded the will as the primary means through which grace operated. This immediately places the exercise of conscience at the heart of Christian life, and anticipates the significance of conscience in a Moderate perspective. Conscience acts simultaneously as our advocate before a heavenly tribunal and as regulator of daily life. It is only through Christ's grace rather than through any particular action on the part of a believer that the conscience may be freed from its constant preoccupation with justification.[277]

As Ian Clarke has pointed out, theological debates over the precise definitions of key doctrine, like the doctrine of grace, were taken up by the Calvinist Church in Scotland in the seventeenth century, resulting in the formation of a systematic set

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[276] For further recent discussion of grace and justification by faith in Reformed theology see Zachman, Randall, The Assurance of Faith Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).
[277] See the earlier discussion in Calvin of conscience and faith in chapter 1.

of creeds that superseded the authority of the Bible in daily worship. Eighteen-century Scottish theologians sought to restore the authority of the Bible and incorporate a more inductive method of theological learning into overall religious speculation. The Moderates clearly followed this trend, however they did so without compromising an essential acceptance of fundamental doctrines outlined in the Westminster Confession. In accepting of the authority of the Westminster Confession, the Moderates clearly committed themselves to orthodoxy and to the established church's standard articulation of the doctrine after 1690. They also followed the example of earlier eighteenth-century Scottish divines whose experiments with rational religion resulted in the introduction of reason into Scottish theological discussion. This permitted joint roles for reason and revelation in determining religious priorities.[278]

Blair is fully aware of the challenges prosperity and commercial culture pose to the regular functioning of conscience, hence the development of a language of religion that permits a certain co-existence of religious and secular priorities. We have seen that Blair is attentive to the dangers that materialism will decrease reliance upon Providence in the realm of second causes, and to the risk of too intellectual an approach to faith threatening piety. In encouraging his listeners towards piety and fidelity, he entreats them to recognise the weakness of human will and the contingency of conscience upon Christ's righteousness. In the end,

[278] Clearly Hutcheson was the most eminent member of this group. However William Wishart (d. 1753), his brother George (1703-85), and Robert Wallace (1696-1771) explored the theological implications of faith accommodating reason. Although his identification as an early Moderate is questionable because he supported the Popular Party over patronage, William Wishart encouraged notions of divine benevolence being the key to understanding God's nature in his lectures at Edinburgh University. He especially promoted the view of God as universal governor of a

the duality of religious and rational priorities cannot be solved; therefore, Blair cultivates the practical advantages of their co-existence for the betterment of self and society while remembering that a Christian's ultimate concern rests in nurturing faith through piety enhanced by grace. In examining Christ's role as intercessor on behalf of Christians, Blair writes:

"... By such view of the Divine nature, Christian faith lays the foundation for a worship which shall be at once rational and affectionate; a worship, in which the light of the understanding shall concur with the devotion of the heart, ... Christian faith is not a system of speculative truths. It is not a lesson of moral instruction only. By a train of high discoveries which it reveals by a succession of interesting objects which it places in our view, it is calculated to elevate the mind, to purify the affections, and by the assistance of devotion, to confirm and encourage virtue."[279]

Because the virtuous person recognises God, "... the spirit of grace from whose inspiration his piety and charity flow ...",[280] he accepts that devotion to God and giving charity to others must not be divided from each other:

"Their union forms the consistent, the graceful, the respectable character of the real Christian, the man of true worth. ... For, by dividing its parts from one another, you never fail to expose it to the censure of the world: And perhaps, by this sort of partial and divided goodness, religion has suffered more in the esteem of mankind, than by open profligacy."[281]

And in defending the ultimate superiority of religious priorities over secular ones, Blair assumes the tone of a Christian apologist, while relying completely on his Christian Stoic vocabulary.

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rational system of existence. (See Sefton, Henry, The Early Development of Moderation in the Church of Scotland, PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1962).

[279] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Death of Christ', in his Sermons, Vol. I, pp. 85-86.

"All the principles which religion teaches, and all the habits which it forms, are favourable to strength of mind. It will be found, that whatever purifies, fortifies also the heart. In the course of living *righteously, soberly, and godly,* a good man acquires a steady and well-governed spirit. Trained, by Divine grace, to enjoy with moderation the advantages of the world, ... , he meets the changes in his lot without unmanly dejection. ... He has learned firmness and self-command. He is accustomed to look up to that Supreme Providence, which disposes of human affairs, not with reverence only, but with trust and hope."[282]

iv

The Sermon as Social Tool

In his use of sermons to promote his message of Christian virtue, Blair selected an efficient means through which he underscores the efficiency of Christian Stoicism, and by extension of the commercial society the Moderates endorsed. By cultivating a society of virtuous Christians, the Moderates defined how the practical application of philosophical or religious ideals to daily life could be achieved. In so doing, they enjoyed a degree of success in proving that the established Church in Scotland played as significant a role in maintaining a stable social order as political or legal entities.

Questions come immediately to mind concerning the use of sermons for political or social ends beyond the realm of moral instruction. Given his parallel careers as clergyman, professor and literary critic, there can be little doubt that Blair anticipated the potentially wide-ranging effects of his sermons. His adroit use of

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[280] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Union of Piety and Morality', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 13.
[281] Ibid., p. 10.
[282] Blair, Hugh, 'On the Influence of Religion upon Adversity', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 20.

sermons to chastise the rebellious of Culloden suggests that he appreciated the full value of pulpit oratory from the earliest stages of his career.[283] In this concluding section, we will suggest that Blair's use of sermons to propagate Christian Stoicism, which for him forms a kind of Moderate theology, parallels William Robertson's use of history to prove numerous Moderate priorities, not least by extension loyalty to the Whig-Hanoverian order. In so doing, he used the sermon as a public tool, rather as others used legal argument or academic lectures, to persuade listeners of the validity of the case at hand.

Blair's justification for using sermons in this manner is found in lecture xxix of his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. The lecture concerns the 'Eloquence of the Pulpit', and describes pulpit oratory as the third great type of public speaking after the 'Eloquence of Popular Assemblies' and the 'Eloquence of the Bar'. The distinct advantages of preaching as a form of public speech rest in the unique dignity and gravity of Biblical subject matter. It is "... such as ought to interest every one, and can be brought home to every man's heart; and such as admit, at the same time, both the highest embellishment in describing, and the greatest vehemence and warmth in enforcing them."[284] According to Blair, a minister has the advantage over lawyers in that his captive audience tends to be larger in number than that of the courtroom. A minister does not, however, have the sword of state at his disposal to enforce Biblical lessons. The clergyman is

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[283] Sher suggests that Blair continued in the formal jeremiad tradition of preaching established in the seventeenth century, which seems somewhat questionable. While Blair followed the traditional Calvinist priority to convey stern moral messages through sermons, it seems the tone and style of the polite sermons the Moderates favoured should be contrasted with those of the earlier jeremiad.

[284] Blair, Hugh, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (London: T. Cadell, 1825, 14th edition), p. 373.

also free to choose his theme or topic at random, allowing maximum time for reflection and preparation of text.

The disadvantages of pulpit oratory mirror its advantages. While lack of interruption promotes the smooth delivery of a sermon thereby strengthening the force with which a moral message is conveyed,"... Debate and Contention enliven genius, and procure attention. The Pulpit Orator is, perhaps, in too quiet possession of his field."[285] For all the nobility of Gospel writings or Old Testament testimony, the lessons flowing from them are extremely familiar to the majority of any Christian audience: "They have for ages employed so many speakers and so many pens; the public ear is so much accustomed to them, that it requires more than an ordinary power of genius to fix attention. Nothing within the reach of art is more difficult, than to bestow on what is common, the grace of novelty."[286]

The challenge of effective sermon-giving is further complicated by the abstract nature of much Biblical material. Clergy return time and again to descriptions of evil and vice, while admonishing their listeners not to hate the criminal who commits vicious or evil acts. The logic and clarity of the legal brief cannot

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[285] Ibid.

[286] Ibid. In illustrating the differences between pulpit and courtroom oratory and the tedium of thematic repetition, Blair refers at length to La Bruyère's discussion of the same in La Bruyère's *Les Caractères, où Mœur de Siècle:* "L'Eloquence de la chaire, en ce qui y entre d'humain, & du talent de l'orateur, est cachée, connue de peu de personnes, & d'une difficile execution. Il faut marcher par des chemins battus, dire ce qui a été dit, & ce qui l'on prevoit que vous allez dire: les matières sont grandes, mais usées & triviales; les principes surs, mail don't les auditeurs pénétrent les conclusions d'une seule vue: il y entre de sujets qui sont sublimes, mais qui peut traiter le sublime? - Le Prédicateur n'est point soutenu comme l'avocat par des fait toujours nouveaux, par de differens évenements, par des avantures inouies, ..."

always be duplicated in the pulpit; for this reason Blair suggests there are few genuinely eloquent ministers in the Church.

To critics who insist that preaching is incapable of generating eloquence, Blair replies that this depends entirely on one's definition of eloquence in speech. If one defines eloquence as the calculated artificial study of words and grammar, Blair acknowledges that pulpit oratory could be limited in claims to eloquence. However:

> "True Eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for conviction and persuasion. This is what every good man who preaches the Gospel not only may, but ought to have at heart."[287]

The ultimate purpose of preaching, Blair continues, is to persuade people of the truths of life that promote virtue and obedience. Therefore every sermon must be a "... persuasive Oration, ... , to be founded on conviction."[288] Sermons must be delivered in a manner and style accessible to all members of a congregation, regardless of individual origin or levels of education. Above all the minister must leave his listeners a 'lasting impression' of the validity and worth of his message which can be absorbed into daily life. Sermons are not the place for philosophical review of metaphysical truths. A sermon must "... give ... at once, clear views, and persuasive impressions of religious truth. The Eloquence of the Pulpit, then, must be Popular Eloquence."[289] Popular not in the sense of agreement with accepted norms, but popular in the sense of "..., calculated to

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[287] Blair, Hugh, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, p. 375.
[288] Ibid.

make an impression on the people; to strike and to seize their hearts."[290] Deepest impressions are formed when the words of the preacher act upon the imagination of the hearer. (The wider significance of imagination will be explored momentarily vis-à-vis Addisonian influences on Blair.)

It is a prerequisite of effective preaching that a minister speak from personal conviction, which enhances the dignity of practical moralising. Speaking from conviction encourages a naturally graceful presentation of moral lessons that is superior to "arts of studied Eloquence."[291] It also prevents the clergyman from lapsing into an overly artificial style of moralising that would be inaccessible to his listeners:

> "A spirit of true piety would prove the most effectual guard against those errors which Preachers are apt to commit. It would make their discourses solid, cogent, and useful; ... ."[292]

Yet it is difficult for preachers to attain, "... that pitch of habitual piety and goodness, which the perfection of Pulpit Eloquence would require, and of uniting it with that thorough knowledge of the world, and those other talents which are requisite for excellency in the Pulpit ... ."[293] The solution is found in a balance of style between 'dull uniform solemnity' and 'theatrical light', or the graceful representation of the dignity of Biblical truth combined with the 'warmth' of its present day application. The ultimate value of a sermon rests in its utility and

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[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ibid., p. 376.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.

tasteful presentation: "Usefulness and true Eloquence always go together; and no man can long be reputed a good Preacher who is not acknowledged to be a useful one."[294]

v

The Matter of Taste

In contextualising the use of sermons within a comparative framework to other forms of public speech, Blair suggests that religious oratory plays a key role in addressing all manner of personal, social and cultural questions. This is consistent with Blair the literary commentator who offers a practical consideration of language as decipherer of cultural questions in another edition of his Essays on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.

Blair examines writing styles, authors, and the system of manners by which works are judged, to determine literature's effect on society. Historical writing, for Blair, must be "a record of truth, for the instruction of mankind."[295] Coherence in historical writing is essential, as are appropriate references to knowledge of politics and human nature in analysing events. "A sound morality should also be characteristic of a perfect historian. He should perpetually show himself upon the side of virtue. It is not, however, his province to preach; and his morality should not occupy too large a proportion of his work."[296] Blair credits

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[294] Ibid., p. 377.
[295] Blair, Hugh, Essays on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, Abridged Chiefly from Dr. Blair's Lectures on that Science with Additions and Improvements (London: J. Murray, 1785), 2nd edition, p. 369.
[296] Ibid., p. 374.

Voltaire and Robertson with realising the significance of "illustrating manners as well as facts" in historical writing.[297] Manners inextricably weave the teaching of morality into the tapestry of history, enriching clear patterns of thought.

Because poetry is intimately tied to the progress of society, Blair's discussion of it is helpful. "It is in the progress of society that poems assume different forms. Time separates into classes the different kinds of poetic composition. A peculiar merit, and certain rules, are assigned to each. The ode and the elegy, the epic poem, and dramatic compositions, are all reduced to regulations, and exercise of acuteness of criticism."[298] It is sufficient that pastoral poetry reflects life rather than giving an accurate historical perspective of it. The appeal of pastoral poetry transcends cultural and social boundaries as, "... human passions are much the same in every situation and rank of life."[299] Hebrew narrative and allegory illustrate an eastern preference for truths conveyed through mysterious tales. In Scripture the prophet, or hero like Joseph, assured effective dissemination of messages. "The figure ... which elevates beyond all others the poetical style of the Scriptures ... is personification."[300] Similarly, the epic hero personifies the qualities or valour of an age, proving the virtue of his era. A form of poetic license common to all genre is limited use of familiar religious tenets or superstitions to enhance a story's credibility.

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[297] Ibid., p. 377.
[298] Ibid., p. 389.
[299] Ibid., p. 401.
[300] Ibid., p. 427.

Poetry illustrates human nature and habit contributing to wider appreciation of the role of taste and imagination in the world. Taste embodies the power to enjoy pleasure or suffer pain through beauty or ugliness in nature and art. "It is a faculty common in some degree to all mankind. Throughout the circle of human nature nothing is more universal than the relish of Beauty, of one kind or other; of what is orderly, proportioned, grand … ."[301] Blair confirms that taste is as crucial to humanity as reason, showing again the significance of taste in Scottish thought as appreciative of the full role of the senses and sentiment.

Through education, taste is one of the most refineable attributes. Delicacy and correctness are its principle elements, and nature teaches human beings not to use them arbitrarily. The universal degree of taste all human beings enjoy guarantees the process's reliability. That taste is the measure of all art has clear cultural significance. That language, as employed in poetry, literature or speech, acts as the crucial tool in the dissemination of cultural ideas is accepted. Blair tells us that we come to comprehend these ideas through imagination.

From the first principles of taste with which we are endowed proceeds "the strong impression" … that … "the powers of Taste and Imagination are calculated to give us of the benevolence of our Creator. By these endowments, he hath widely enlarged the sphere of the pleasures of human life; and those, too, of a kind the most pure and innocent."[302] Our senses of fear or the sublime, then, must be deeply tied to taste and imagination, perhaps finding their roots in the same soil

[301] Ibid., p. 9.
[302] Ibid., p. 24.

as morality.[303] Yet there seems to be no evidence to suggest that for Blair religion becomes a matter of taste. The emphasis shifts from critical examination to the process of creation based on imagination. We are also returned to Hutcheson's and Joseph Addison's[304] notion of taste as a faculty of the soul.

Addison's influence upon Blair, and indeed upon Blair's colleagues among the literati, was great not only within the realm of literature but in his advocacy of virtue and the merits of religion:

"Mr. Addison is, beyond doubt, in the English language, the most perfect example: and, therefore, though not without some faults, he is, on the whole, the safest model for imitation, … . Perspicuous and pure he is in the highest degree; … . There is not the least affectation in his manner: we see no marks of labour; …; but great elegance joined with great ease and Simplicity. He is, …, distinguished by a character of modesty, and of politeness, which appears in all his writings. No author has a more popular and insinuating manner; and the great regard with which he everywhere shews for virtue and religion, recommends him highly."[305]

As we saw in chapter 3, Addison stated that concerning imagination and pleasure, humans cannot … "assign the necessary cause of this pleasure, because we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the substance of a human soul, … therefore, for want of such a light, all we can do in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on those operations of the soul that are more agreeable, … and …, what is pleasing

[303] The precise relationship in Blair's mind between taste and reason is somewhat unclear. If specific ties exist between taste and reason, they may exist through the imagination assisting one in the process of rational moral decision-making.
[304] Blair's Christian Stoicism overwhelmingly assumed Addison's polite characterisation of religion and 'godly capitalism' through the system of manners, taste and tolerance described in chapter 3.
[305] Blair, Hugh, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, p. 246-47.

or displeasing to the mind.[306] Addison suggested that because the Supreme Author formed the soul for human happiness, contemplation of the great and boundless in art is tantamount to an act of praising God.

We also know that Addison limited his perimeters of imagination. It is a finite attribute; our capability for understanding, on the other hand, is not necessarily limited as we can try to comprehend the infinite through infinite exercises. Imagination is restricted by the brain's finite capacity to retain impressions: with the passing of time, humans lose grounds of reference. This seems logical given the imperfections of human nature and reason. Addison's conclusion returns the reader to the Creator, "... what an infinite advantage this faculty gives the Almighty Being over the soul of man, and how great a measure if happiness or misery we are capable of receiving from the imagination only."[307]

If imagination is limited, then the tools that convey its fruits must be limited. Language falls into this category, but the implications of language as finite do not diminish its effectiveness in relaying cultural improvement. Language remains capable of transcending complex cultural boundaries, as do artistic creations. By placing the intellectual fruits proceeding from them into a context dependent upon God for ultimate truth and meaning, Addison perhaps suggests that the most sublime creations are manifestations of grace.

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[306] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator* No. 413 quoted in Bond, D.F., Critical Essays from The Spectator, p. 181.
[307] Addison, Joseph, *The Spectator* No. 421, quoted in ibid., p. 207.

We have also seen that Addison's religious commentary was motivated by his commitment to Christianity and the Church of England while remaining sensitive to the challenges of reason and natural religion. Again, Blair and the Moderates assumed these priorities in their commitment to Christian principles and in their dedication to protecting the role of the Presbyterian Church in eighteenth-century Scottish society.

Blair was further influenced by Addison's belief that natural and revealed religion are best appreciated as complementary rather than mutually exclusive in society. Blair agreed that both types of religion promote improvement, but find strength for each other in a duality of roles. Like Addison, Blair seems to believe that the ultimate purpose of natural and revealed religion is to encourage proper duties devoid of the superstition and enthusiasm, that in turn, highlighted the presence of the Divine in the world order. Proper duties lead to a reasonable devotion that promotes the greater good of civil society. Blair, again like Addison, left his audience with the soul directly linked with all that defined the identity and integrity of human beings.

Conclusion

Fania Oz-Salzberger argues in her introduction to Adam Ferguson's Essays on Civil Society that "... traditional republican discourse had no answers for the new respectability of wealth and social refinement, which eighteenth-century Scots came to associate with the modern age." Hugh Blair and his colleagues among the Enlightenment literati faced a number of challenges in defining the

intellectual, moral and ethical foundation of the commercial culture evolving in their midst. Oz-Salzberger continues, either "... the civic value had to be radically adjusted to the new ethics of sociability, commerce and freedom under the law; or else new proof was required for their relevance to the modern state."[308] Moderates like Blair attempted to adjust key civic virtues found in classical republicanism to create a scheme of social ethics for the modern age; Ferguson, on the other hand, sought to prove the inherent relevance of civic virtues without significantly altering their character. Classical republican and Stoic themes and vocabularies lent themselves to both approaches.

It has been argued here that Hugh Blair's contribution to these dialogues rested in his employment of a language of religion, Christian Stoicism, that accommodated Christian morality and virtuous ethics, both of which were essential to the orderly functioning of a civilised society. Blair defined this language of religion in distinctly personal terms by encouraging his listeners to cultivate virtuous characteristics that enhanced their own development and facilitated social interaction. Blair concerned himself with the consistent application of moral principles to daily life, reflecting less upon the theological implications of blending Christianity with Stoic themes.

In Blair's interpretation of Stoicism, its intensely practical nature provided a useful method of addressing tensions between reason and sense; doctrine and religious practise; metaphysical deliberation and a life of action; and, public and

[308] Ferguson, Adam, An Essay on Civil Society, (ed.) Oz-Salzberger, Fania (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. xvi.

private interest. In his role as a moral instructor, the overriding purpose of Blair's Christian Stoicism was to encourage the greatest possible degree of unity and order in society by creating ethical priorities out of Christian Stoic virtue. A prudent fear of God combined with just action and beneficence produced happiness and tranquility. And Blair relied on the twin foundations of government and religion to underscore order, thus identifying the essential role for the Presbyterian Church in early British civil society.

In chapter 2, it was argued that elements of seventeenth-century Dutch Neostoic thought lend themselves to an eighteenth-century Scottish context for Blair's Christian Stoicism in terms of addressing the role of religion in commercial culture. In Lipsian Neostoicism, we found that traditional tensions between reason and sentiment, between 'head' and 'heart', were reconcilable to a limited degree. Lipsius resorted to Neostoicism to emphasise the utility of system where co-existence of ethical priorities was not only possible but desirable.

Lipsian Neostoicism operated on the principle that the state provided the unifying bond in society, and Lipsius placed the military at the heart of protecting civil society. For Blair and his colleagues, government and the individual citizen assume this role. Blair incorporates traditional Neostoic emphasis on self-discipline and devotion to duty in his Christian Stoicism. Like earlier Neostoics, he suggests that the benefits secured through self-command contribute to a high quality of life for the commonweal.[309] The practical application of Christian

[309] Although we know that surviving evidence does not point to Lipsius having any direct influence on Blair, a copy of Lipsius' edition of Seneca, Phil. Opera (Antwerp, 1652) appears in

Stoic values encourages the moral fortitude required to withstand Mandevillean-style temptations inherent in the commercial order.

In exploring the pre-eminent virtues Blair recommends to his listeners, constancy, order, and obedience to Providence, he highlights the useful aspects of the complementary relationship between natural and revealed religion. This, in turn, reflects the considerable influences Hutcheson and Addison had upon Blair's thought. It also reminds the reader of the need to place consideration of Blair's sermons within the context of his literary and academic treatment of religious writing.

Despite identifying a structure for moral decision making that protected the status quo while cultivating a notion of progress and improvement in society, Blair suggests that there are limits upon Christian Stoicism just as there are limits upon human knowledge. He suggests that "the measure according to which knowledge is dispensed to man, affords conspicuous proofs of divine wisdom."[310] Complete knowledge would "raise men to levels incompatible with his 'present powers'. Man is left in a state of conjecture and this is most useful to his improvement."[311] God provides sufficient information to behave virtuously in society ... "without disturbing the operations of His mind."[312]

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the sales catalogue of Blair's library. The Advocates Library also held a number of Lipsius editions, including a French edition of his, Six livres des politique ou doctrine civile (Rochelle, 1590); and his editions of Seneca. [See A Catalogue of the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, Vol. I. (Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas, Walter, and Thomas Ruddiman, 1742), pp. 340-41.]

[310] Blair, Hugh, Sermons, Vol. I, p. 122.

[311] Ibid.

By definition, conjecture leaves an imaginative door ajar, granting a degree of speculative freedom necessary tolerant of the mind's limitations. Blair's language of religion occurs within the ordered interdependent web of moral happiness and pain. The language's inevitably mysterious elements are products of nature's or God's broader eminence. Blair suggests we often fail to understand incidents that give unintended benefit or pain to those around us. The consequences of this Divinely ordered structure (or externally ordered structure) generally lead to personal or social improvement.[313]

We have seen that for Blair our conduct is directed by moral principles which constitute a law "written in our hearts."[314] This law is key to Blair's belief in the fundamental principle of all religion, "That there is in human nature, an approving or condemning sense of conduct by means of which, they who have not the law, are a law unto themselves."[315] Our natural sense of morality turned upon ourselves becomes conscience. Conscience assumes the existence of a judge exerting influence on our decision making. "Every law supposes a rightful

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[312] Ibid.

[313] The similarity between Blair's understanding of the unintended benefits or pain in life and the unintended consequences of the operation of the Invisible Hand in Adam Smith's theory seems evident. It is not entirely clear how deeply Blair delved into Smith's The Theory of Moral Sentiments, but he was familiar with the text, and he praised Smith for the quality of The Wealth of Nations. Blair's reliance on the draft of Smith's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres to write his own lectures on the subject is well known. This raises questions about the depths to which Blair relied generally on Smith's intellectual arguments. See note 1 to Blair's letter to Smith on The Wealth of Nations, 2 April 1776, in Smith, Adam, Correspondence, (eds) Mossner, E.C. and Ross, I.S. (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1987), p. 187-88: "... Blair followed Smith and Robert Watson in lecturing on rhetoric at Edinburgh. He was shown by Smith 'part of a manuscript treatise on rhetoric', presumably a version of the later LRBL, and he incorporated ideas from it in his own lectures. Also, he is reported as making use of Smith's ideas on jurisprudence in his sermons, but Smith did not complain, remarking: 'He is very welcome. There is enough left' (Rae 33, quoting indirectly Henry Mackenzie)." The Moderates' reliance upon Smithian moral theory will be discussed at length in Part III.

[314] Blair, Hugh, Sermons, Vol. I, p. 228. (Blair may have taken his phrase from exactly similar wording found in Chapter IV of the Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646.)

[315] Ibid., p. 229.

superior: And, therefore, when conscience threatens punishment to secret crimes, it manifestly recognises a Supreme Governor, from whom nothing is hidden ... ."[316] Therefore, God is necessarily the source of our conscience. God is also the source of moral obligation, giving rise to our sense of duty. Duty operating in nature is essential to comprehending revelation. Without duty humanity is incapable of religion.

We return again to the complementary relationship between natural and revealed religion. Blair confirms that "natural and revealed religion proceed from the same Author; and ... are analogous and contingent. They are part of the same plan of Providence. They are connected measures of the same system of government."[317] The former prepares us for the reception of the latter. By extension, a similar relationship must exist between moral philosophy and theology. A question comes to mind as to whether, for Blair, a true child of Providence is analogous to the Stoic model of man? In this context, could it then be suggested that Blair and the literati recast the image of a follower of natural religion, restoring the senses to a level co-equal with reason in determining identity. This approach replies in a more sophisticated manner to Bishop Butler's precept that natural religion is the primitive faith of Genesis.

Although Blair is generally noted for his literary and academic pursuits, it is argued here that he should be remembered equally for the depths to which he considered questions of morality, virtue and faith in society. In his use of

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[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid., pp. 244-45.

sermons for moral instruction, Blair focusses the attention of his listeners upon their personal private and public conduct. His interpretation of the Stoic model offered less dogmatic access to virtuous lifestyles than orthodox Calvinism, which set the tone for how Moderate Christian Stoic tenets were practised in society. In this sense, for Blair, perhaps Stoicism's great appeal rested in its recognition of virtuous sensibility and a composed frame of spirit underscored by a Protestant-like sobriety.

Chapter 5

Robertson's Christian Stoicism and the Public Face of Virtue

Introduction

William Robertson (1721-93) shared Hugh Blair's passion for investigating the nature of morality, yet these two Moderate friends and colleagues explored it from very different perspectives. While we have seen that Blair approached morality from an essentially aesthetic point of view, Robertson, as a historian, investigated morality within the framework of exploring the general laws of civil society. More specifically, he followed in the tradition of Montesquieu, David Hume and Adam Smith by concerning himself with the social and historical laws that regulate civic life. He also shared their deep commitment to exploring the manners that characterised human behaviour.

Robertson's methodology reflected the priorities of the Scottish conjectural school of history,[318] and highlighted the virtuous themes of the humanist tradition in which he received his early education at the University of Edinburgh. In agreeing with the premise of Hume and Smith that civil society was transformed

[318] From among numerous discussions of conjectural history or the four-stage theory of history, see Höpfl, Harro, 'From Savage to Scotsman: Conjectural History in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies,* 17, (1978), pp. 19-40; Wood, P.B., 'The Natural History of Man in the Scottish Enlightenment', *History of Science,* 28 (1989), pp. 89-123.

by the commercial successes of the modern era, Robertson acknowledged the positive effects material progress had on patterns of social improvement.

Robertson accepted the general proposition of conjectural historiography that commercial political society formed the final and most advanced stage of history, the end results of which were civil order and social harmony. Robertson joined Smith in encouraging the pursuit of virtue as a mainstay of social harmony. Both men looked to providence in one form or another to underpin the general laws. While interpretations vary as to Smith's precise understanding of providence, there is no doubt that in Robertson's mind the integral force of divine providence underscored the general laws of society and by extension the forces of history itself.

As a clergyman and as a leader of the Church of Scotland from 1762-80, Robertson played a pivotal role in promoting unity and discipline within the Church. Under his skilful leadership, the Moderate clergy secured their control of the General Assembly in the latter half of the eighteenth century and consolidated the Scottish Church's position within the British state.

The current resurgence of Robertsonian studies in Scottish Enlightenment historiography has greatly enhanced our knowledge of Robertson the intellectual and politician. However, as Nicholas Phillipson points out, our knowledge of

Robertson's religious thought remains under-explored.[319] Richard Sher's portrait of Robertson as staunch defender of 'public virtue' or 'Whig-Presbyterian conservatism' remains most helpful when investigating Robertson's management of ecclesiastical affairs.[320] Colin Kidd describes Robertson as "... an unashamed modern"[321], who embraced the challenge to redefine Presbyterianism for an advanced commercial age. In a rare exploration of Robertson's theological preferences, Jeffrey Smitten argues that Robertson was strongly influenced by continental Arminianism[322], particularly in his acceptance of sceptical epistemology and a "... synergetic view of the relationship between human action and divine providence ...".[323]

These are all useful fixed points for analysing Robertson's religious character yet the diversity of these interpretations illustrates the complexity of the task, not least when addressing his interest in stoicism. This interest is now widely acknowledged by Enlightenment historians but it remains something of a mystery. Unlike High Blair, Robertson left little direct evidence to assist one in analysing how he reconciled stoic values with his Christian principles.[324] His use

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[319] See Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Providence and progress: an introduction to the historical thought of William Robertson', in Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the expansion of empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 3, pp. 55-73.
[320] See Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), pp. 187-212.
[321] Kidd, Colin, 'The ideological significance of the History of Scotland', in Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the expansion of empire, chapter 6, p. 135.
[322] Formally defined as the teachings of the Dutch Protestant theologian, Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), who stated that predestination was conditional. He suggested that Christ died for all rather than for the Elect. This pitted free will against grace in questions of salvation and broke with traditional Calvinist interpretations of the Doctrine of the Elect. (See also references to Arminianism in chapter 2.)
[323] Smitten, Jeffrey, 'The Shaping of Moderation: William Robertson and Arminianism', in *Studies of Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 22 (1992), p. 282.
[324] The strongest surviving evidence of Robertson's interest in stoicism is the manuscript of Robertson's translation of Marcus Aurelius' The Meditations, which will be discussed in following sections.

of stoic themes and vocabulary simply suggests that Robertson adopted a civic humanist language of virtue as it evolved in an Enlightenment context. Yet, given the subtlety of Robertson's mind and historical thought, it seems unreasonable to suggest that there is no further story to tell about Robertson on stoicism. Indeed, he seems to challenge his audience to read between the lines of surviving texts to explore why he found the world-view of Epictetus, Zeno and Marcus Aurelius so appealing.

Robertson used stoic-like characters to infer lessons in history, and embedded criteria for virtuous behavior in his narrative. In his historical writing and in his published sermon[325], Robertson meticulously illustrated how fulfillment of public and private duties improved individuals and societies throughout the ages. Robertson shared Blair's commitment to incorporating Christian virtues into the polite social ethics of commercial culture. This chapter suggests that Robertson was a Moderate Christian Stoic; however, it is not altogether clear that his brand of Christian Stoicism matched Hugh Blair's. Robertson's grand view of the role of providence in history underscores his interest in the cultivation of virtue in society. The pursuit of virtue, order and tranquility seem to be the three stoic themes that Robertson found most useful in his histories. But Robertson's treatment of virtue is ambiguous.[326]

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[325] Robertson, William, '*The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance, and its Connection with the Success of his Religion, considered.* A Sermon, Preached Before the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, ... Monday January 6. 1755' (Edinburgh: Elphingston Balfour, 1791), facsimile reprint of 6th edition, in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. XI (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1996).

[326] I am very grateful for discussions with Neil Hargraves about these matters.

He favours the cultivation of public virtue, working for the good of the whole, over private virtue, a matter more of self-improvement, which he views as inconsistent and unreliable. In The History of Scotland (1759) and The History of America (1778), for example, one witnesses the collapse of societies due to increasing disorder or civil strife. The aftermath of this collapse in the case of America is characterised by a certain tranquility, a period of inactivity in society, that provides a resting point from which society renews itself and a new system of public virtue acts as both the means of social rejuvenation and its end, and the security derived from a well-ordered society offers the ideal atmosphere within which public virtue operates. Once public virtue is restored in society, it provides the foundation for the pursuit of private virtue. It is constancy in public virtue, however, that provides the mainstay of social development and progress.

This chapter will investigate Robertson's interest in stoicism with a view to furthering understanding of his religious thought. At times the exercise will involve asking the right questions as much as suggesting answers, and at times the evidence gathered remains inconclusive. Because Robertson's interest in stoicism must be examined within the context of Moderate advocacy of civil society and his treatment of natural and revealed religion, the chapter will open with a discussion of both. Robertson's early interest in stoicism will be highlighted as will the intellectual context in which the Moderates developed their understanding of civil society.

This will be followed by a discussion of Robertson's endorsement of public virtue in his final published work, An Historical Disquisition Concerning the

Knowledge the Ancients had of India (1791). The Disquisition highlights public virtue as a powerful guarantor of social harmony. It prominently displays the role of the Brahmin caste at the head of India's social system. The virtues of the Brahmins will be explored, particularly those Robertson compares favourably with the ancient Stoics. The chapter will end by reconsidering points raised by Smitten about Robertson's religious preferences. It is hoped that this process will permit a reply to the question: what was the nature of Robertson's Christian Stoicism?

i

A Moderate Understanding of Civil Society

When investigating Robertson on civil society, one is confronted by an immediate question: what did Robertson mean by civil society? Despite numerous references to the term appearing throughout his histories, Robertson seems not to have defined it in his own words. Therefore a definition must be drawn from an examination of the contexts within which he understood civil society both in terms of Scotland's historical tradition that married civic duty with moral responsibility, and the contemporary Moderate perspective of Robertson's day.

In Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment, David Allan argues persuasively that it was a priority of Scottish intellectual life before the Enlightenment to nurture existing ties between the moral and spiritual in public life. Following the examples of sixteenth-century Calvinism and Renaissance

humanism, personal piety became inextricably linked to the exercise of public virtue. This linking formed the nexus between civil and religious interests that continued to permeate society throughout the eighteenth century.

Pre-enlightenment historians came to investigate the nature of morality through political life, and a quest for truly virtuous social leaders lay at the heart of their historiography. George Buchanan, Bishop John Lesley and Alexander Ross, for example, developed a line of historical thought intent on transmitting the benefits of civic patriotism to their audiences. Calvinist priorities of moral self-discipline and godliness converged with patriotism to form the core of a Ciceronian style public-spiritedness evoked in the civic republicanism of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun and others. For our purposes it is particularly important to note that the language convergence often employed stoic vocabulary.[327] Allan reminds the reader that from the point of view of appreciating a long standing Scottish discussion about the nature of private behaviour and public life, "... association of virtue with a committed pursuit of the public interest ..."[328] was prevalent from Knox's time forward.

Enlightenment theorists were often ambiguous in their acknowledgement of an intellectual debt to their predecessors. From among Moderate ranks Robertson was selective in his praise for sixteenth and seventeenth-century historians, while Adam Ferguson actively criticised them on ideological grounds.[329] As men of

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[327] Allan, David, Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment, part 1 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993).
[328] Ibid., p. 97.
[329] Ferguson criticised them for being determinist. He also favoured the idea that history, and the study of history, should be open ended, a notion not favoured by sixteenth and seventeenth-

faith, they obviously recognised the influence of the strict Calvinist providentialism that reinfused Scottish historiography with the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in 1689. However the providentialism of that moment failed to provide a comprehensive blueprint for analysing the challenges of Newtonian science and natural philosophy, the legacy of the natural law school, or indeed the moral dilemmas of commercial luxury.

Enlightenment historiography as it evolved within theories of conjectural history provided a framework for investigating each of the above mentioned elements. After Hume pointed to experience as a valuable historical resource in A Treatise of Human Nature (1739-40), the door opened for Smith, Robertson, Lord Kames and John Millar to apply the tools of speculative scientific reasoning to social and moral matters. Hume laid the philosophical foundation for the Enlightenment literati to reconstruct their understanding of social development while justifying the economic success and social benefits proceeding from the Union of 1707. For his part, Robertson combined speculation with a parallel interest in probable reasoning, more about which will be said at a later stage, to form a legitimate method of historical analysis supportive of the Hanoverian order.

Departing further from earlier Scottish historiography, Hume introduced the notion that scholars must examine history and society within the context of the culture of a particular era. This became the hallmark of conjectural history. In

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century historians in his view. For a useful discussion of Ferguson's interest in history, see the introduction in Ferguson, Adam, An Essay on the History of Civil Society, (ed.) Oz-Salzberger,

his essay, *Of National Characters,* Hume insisted that it is first to moral causes that the theorist or historian must turn to examine the nature of a civilisation:

"Different reasons are assigned for these *national characters*; while some account for them from *moral*, others from *physical* causes. By *moral* causes, I mean all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reason, and which render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us. Of this kind are, the nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty of penury in which people live, ..., and such like circumstances. ... That the character of a nation will much depend on *moral* causes, must be evident to the most superficial observer; since a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals, and the manners of individuals are frequently determined by these causes."[330]

In his Lectures on Jurisprudence,[331] Smith applied Hume's principle to matters of justice and politics, whereby the history of civil society was linked to the division of property ownership and to the customs and manners of a culture. Mankind evolved through four unique but contingent historical stages that brought it into the commercial world where the literati found themselves: the barbarous state devoid of a notion of property rights; a nomadic stage in which property received some recognition; an agricultural stage followed by the commercial stage.[332]

The significance of conjectural history within the Enlightenment canon has been acknowledged in earlier passages, as has the intellectual debt owed to the natural jurisprudential school of Grotius and Pufendorf by all of the Scots in defining civil society.[333] As we have seen, the particular legacy of Pufendorf's emphasis

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Fania, pp. xv-xxv.
[330] Hume, David, Essays Moral, Political and Literary, (ed.) Miller, E.F., p. 198.
[331] Given at the University of Glasgow, 1752-63.
[332] See Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Providence and progress: an introduction to the historical thought of William Robertson', in Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire, chapter 3, pp. 58-9.
[333] See chapter 3.

on property as the essential social institution underscoring economic progress greatly influenced Smith, and it is from Pufendorf's development of a stadial theory of social progress that Smith took models for his scheme. The debt of Grotius and Pufendorf, combined with the translation of classical republican virtues into a kind of Scottish civic humanism by Hutcheson and others, provide two of the three key elements which constitute the bedrock of Moderate understanding of civil society. The third party to whom much is owned is Montesquieu. Adam Ferguson's particular enthusiasm for the philosopher is notable:

"When I recollect what the President Montesquieu has written I am at a loss to tell, why I should treat of human affairs; but I too am instigated by my reflections, and my sentiments; and I may utter them more to the comprehension of ordinary capacities, because I am more on the level of ordinary men."[334]

In Montesquieu's L'Esprit des Lois (1748), the Scots found a positive case made for the establishment of a modern polity based upon broad political freedom, and economic progress operating through fixed institutions. Montesquieu legitimised the historical study of law and government, and he proposed that true political freedom rested upon the rule of law, a firm constitution, and economic progress. The legal and political institutions that safeguarded society formed the new dimensions within which citizens lived. By expanding the context of political identity into an institutional framework, Montesquieu transcended the more

[334] Ferguson, Adam, An Essay on the History of Civil Society (ed.) Oz-Salzberger, Fania, p. 66. It is important to note that while Hume criticised Ferguson's Essay, both Robertson and Blair approved of its general argument and themes, particularly Ferguson's emphasis on public virtue.

narrowly defined republican understanding of active citizenship embodied by the virtuous citizen-warrior.

For Robertson, perhaps Montesquieu's greatest appeal was found in his recognition that historical principles affected the laws and customs of society. However, as Nicholas Phillipson points out, the Scots did not take up Montesquieu in his entirety. Hume objected to Montesquieu's emphasis of physical influences upon culture in that they did not "... explain the astonishing variety of manners, laws, and religions ..." prevalent in Europe.[335]

In embracing Montesquieu's institutional framework, the Scots found the latitude they needed to redefine citizenship for the modern commercial era. Because commerce became "... the great object of nations, and the principle study of mankind ...",[336] it was crucial to place the new citizen at the heart of commercial civil society. The virtues of classical citizenship, duty, honour and a commitment to the greater good, were combined with benevolence within the confines of polite ethics to justify the pursuit of self-interest. Ultimately the Moderates, like all of the Scots, relied upon a continuing link between the public and private personae to maintain social order and tranquility. Again Ferguson reminds his reader:

"Man is, by nature, the member of a community; and when considered in this capacity, the individual appears to be no longer made for himself. He must

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[335] See Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Providence and progress: an introduction to the historical thought of William Robertson', in Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire, pp. 58-9.
[336] Ferguson, Adam, An Essay on the History of Civil Society (ed.) Oz-Salzberger, Fania, p. 58.

forego his happiness and his freedom, where these interfere with the good of society. He is only part of a whole; and the praise we think due to his virtue, is but a branch of that more general commendation we bestow on the member of a body, ... If this follow from the relation of a part to its whole, and if the public good be the principal object with individuals, it is likewise true, that the happiness of individuals is the great end of civil society. ... The interests of society, however, and of its members, are easily reconciled."[337]

Despite being irrevocably linked, the public duties of citizenship take precedence over private ones in Ferguson's mind, as they did for Robertson. This linkage extends to the realm of morality in that it becomes a matter of personal moral obligation to accept the social order and to contribute to the public good.

Given that Robertson, Blair and a number of other Moderate clergy approved of the Essay's general arguments and themes, it seems reasonable to suggest that Ferguson's understanding of civil society may be used as a broad basis for a Moderate understanding of the same.[338] Therefore civil society is defined here as the established political, economic and social order that fostered law and harmony among citizens, and encouraged what Ferguson called 'refinements of civil life' and commercial progress.

Providence's redemptive powers also provided the ultimate sanction of earthly progress and empire, and the tie between public and private virtue reflected the immutable bond between God and his people. Taken in these terms, the combination of values and ideas lying at the heart of Moderate civil society fit

[337] Ibid., p. 59.
[338] As indicated Ferguson's articulation of the strengths of public virtue was appealing to the Moderates' polite sensibilities, although some objected to Ferguson's particularly civic republican rather than polite tone.

together neatly. But from their critics' point of view this neatness was deceptive in its lack of specificity. The very fact that the Moderates had to rely on a pagan stoic vocabulary to best describe their civic ideals fed suspicion about their religious discipline and piety.

ii

Robertson's Early Interest in Stoicism and General Treatment of Religion

William Robertson was born to Eleanor Pitcairn and William Robertson, a minister of the Church of Scotland, at Borthwick near Edinburgh on 19 September 1721. His father, also William, fostered Robertson's early interest in scholarly pursuits and oversaw his primary education at the Borthwick parish school and in Dalkeith. Robertson's mother, Eleanor, seems to have been the disciplinarian, ruling the Robertson household with the rigour characteristic of a pious Presbyterian family. In 1733 the elder Robertson was appointed to an Edinburgh parish and the family left Borthwick for the capital. Soon thereafter young William began studies at the University of Edinburgh. By April 1744 he joined the ministry, and succeeded his uncle as minister at Gladsmuir, which was under the patronage of the Earl of Hopetoun. From this point he embarked on a career in the Church of Scotland that saw him appointed one of His Majesty's Chaplains, elected as Moderator of the General Assembly and acknowledged as the leader of the Moderate Party.[339]

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[339] Robertson's adeptness at cultivating political patronage was fully evident by his 30's and early 40's. His surviving correspondence contains numerous letters about securing church and university appointments for both himself and his Moderate friends. See, for example, Robertson to Gilbert Elliot, 25 June 1761, discussing the recently vacated Deanery of the Chapel Royal (NLS MS 11009). He was, however, acutely aware of the price of political involvements,

While an undergraduate Robertson had displayed his first serious interest in exploring the nature of civil society and developing the tools he used throughout his career as a historian and churchman. Like Blair, Robertson later acknowledged the particular benefit of Dr. Stevenson's lectures at university not least in their emphasis on Locke, Addison and stoic themes. In an early essay on assent to historical evidence, Robertson displayed signs of his acceptance of probable reasoning as a desirable means of intellectual analysis.[340] He followed Locke and Butler in believing that the full nature of truth was known only to God. Therefore an epistemological method of weighing historical evidence was required that operated within the limited confines of the human mind. By logically determining the probability of a certain proposition, the mind arrived by degrees at a consensus suggesting a particular conclusion. The probable method mirrored the Stoic weighing of the good of the whole over the individual member or part.

Most likely as a result of Stevenson's lectures in the history of philosophy, and under the influence of the course books, Thomas Stanley's History of Philosophy

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particularly the amount of time they detracted from scholarly work. He wrote to Elliot on an earlier occasion, "... I have, however, made several additions to my work, & many corrections. [The History of Scotland] And I grow every day more confirmed in the resolution of keeping my hands clean of all the dirty work which in this country goes by the name of politics. I see nothing a Clergyman can gain, but much that he ... necessarily lose by meddling with them." (See Robertson to Gilbert Elliot, 24 June 1758, NLS MS 11009, f. 58).

[340] In weighing the value of moral evidence through probable reasoning, Robertson commented, "... it is an established fact that fair administration of justice, the defence of public liberty and safety, and indeed the conservation of political order and rule look to this evidence especially; besides, the greatest and most useful part of our learning and knowledge, the truth about what has been done, and whatever can be comprehended under the name of history, even including faith in our most holy Christian religion, depends on and is sustained by testimony of this sort, ..." See Robertson's 'Essay on Historical Probability', in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. XII, p. 8.

and Diogenes Laertius' Lives of the Philosophers, Robertson started a translation of Marcus Aurelius's Meditations[341] in 1742. Though the work was not completed or printed, probably due to the publication of a full translation of The Meditations by Francis Hutcheson later that year, Robertson's choice of Aurelius offers the strongest available evidence of his early commitment to stoic ideals.

In addition to its ethical appeal, Smitten points out that Robertson's choice of The Meditations had linguistic significance. Robertson was acutely aware of the need to develop an elegant literary style. He used essays and translations to perfect his written prose, while practising the oratorical skills crucial for a successful career in the pulpit. Smitten suggests that the balanced quality of Robertson's prose in the translation shows an advanced sensitivity to the power of speech that "... embodies ... the relationship among things and events ..." that became "... his means of expressing his historical vision."[342] Robertson may also have shared Hutcheson's opinion that the stylised prose of earlier English translations failed to convey the elegant simplicity of the book so appealing to the Stoics.[343]

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[341] See the manuscript of Robertson's translation of Marcus Aurelius, Meditations dated 21 January 1742, (NLS MS 3955). Unfortunately the MS offers few clues about why Robertson chose the Emperor's book to translate. There are no notes in the margins, and a surprisingly limited number of corrections.

[342] See Smitten's introduction in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. XII, p. xvii.

[343] In the introduction to Hutcheson's edition, it is stated that the purpose of the translation is to make The Meditations "... as plain as the subjects would admit ..." and "... to affect the hearts of those who have any sense of goodness, and warm them with the noblest emotions, of piety, gratitude, and resignation to GOD; ... ." Hutcheson wished to emphasise the virtuous character of the Emperor, and warned against 'silly prejudices' distracting readers from the useful lessons of ancient authors. See Aurelius Antoninus, Marcus, Meditations, with notes and accounts of his life: the first two books translated by James Moor, the rest by Francis Hutcheson (Glasgow, 1742), pp. 1-2 and 42-3.

There is no evidence to suggest that Robertson's appetite for moral philosophical speculation at university came into conflict with his early faith. Robertson would have received a traditional religious education at the hands of parish teachers and his father. However John Erskine, Robertson's colleague at Greyfriars, attested to Robertson's father having a 'liberality of mind' that influenced the selection of authors present in the family library. The elder Robertson was familiar with Dutch and further continental theological discussion, not least with the Arminianism of Jean Le Clerc, Philip Limborch and Samuel Werenfels. The young Robertson, according to Erskine, placed the Arminians in 'early and high esteem', though he only admired those parts of their works concordant with the Westminster Confession.[344]

The Scottish clergy's interest in continental theology during the early decades of the eighteenth century proceeded from earlier seventeenth-century discussion about the ramifications of the Synod of Dort and the theological controversies in the Low Countries referred to in chapter two. And the presence of Arminian texts in the Robertson family library simply suggests that the elder Robertson involved himself in intellectual debates that were revived after the arrival of William III in Britain.[345] While we will return to further consideration of ties between Robertson's Arminian influences and stoicism at the end of the chapter,

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[344] Erskine, John, 'The Agency of God in Human Greatness: Appendix', in Erskine, John, Discourses Preached on Several Occasions, (ed.) Wellwood, Sr. H.M., 2 Vols. (Edinburgh, 1818), Vol. I, p. 253.

[345] The sources for the information about Arminian texts in the Robertson family library are Erskine and Smitten, neither of whom indicate specific titles of Arminian texts. It has not been possible to trace a catalogue of the elder Robertson's library. Some of the texts that may have been in the collection given their popularity in Arminian circles were: Limbroch, Philip, A Compleat System of Body of Divinity, 2 Vols. (London: 1713); and, Werenfels, Samuel, Three Discourses (London, 1718).

it is significant to note for the moment that seeds sown in Robertson's childhood fuelled his lifelong commitment to a disciplined, scholarly and tolerant attitude towards religion. Stoicism underscored the balance of such an approach, and its themes of universality, virtue, order and subservience to the greater good lent themselves easily to Robertson's understanding of what was desirable in civil society.

By the time The History of Scotland was published in 1759, Robertson's commitment to the progress of Christianity and his certainty of its civilising influences were established.[346] It is accepted that as a Moderate, Robertson supported toleration and refinement in religion. He was dedicated to the eradication of superstition and enthusiasm in all religions, but from Christianity particularly. He was keenly interested in the development of natural religion among primitive peoples, and inferences drawn from its study for sophisticated societies. This was particularly true in the case of India, where Robertson admired the tolerance existing between monotheistic and polytheistic faiths. Robertson does not question religion's significance or the need for faith, but perhaps he exemplified Dugald Stewart's later description of Adam Smith's purpose, "to illustrate the provisions made by nature in the principles of the human mind, and in the circumstances of man's external situation."[347]

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[346] See Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Providence and progress: an introduction to the historical thought of William Robertson', in Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the expansion of empire, chap. 3, pp. 55-73.

[347] Stewart, Dugald, Biographical Memoir of Adam Smith [Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co. and London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1858, in The Adam Smith Library, Reprints of Economic Classics (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966)], p. 60. [Smith's terms were in this case applied to economics concerning the acquisition of wealth, but it illustrates Smith's wider point that the greatest liberty lies in following the order set out by nature (read Providence for the clerics).]

Stoicism and natural religion share numerous elements of vocabulary if we can define a Moderate interpretation of natural religion as the "derivation of theological conclusions from premises accepted by all rational human beings."[348] Both refer to a prevailing order in nature guided by an energy or an Architect of the Universe; both acknowledge the significance of reason as man's unique faculty enabling the pursuit of virtue, and both advocate the restraint of passion to distinguish human beings from irrational creatures.

In A History of the Progress of Society in Europe (1769),[349] Robertson criticised the vulnerability of primitive Christianity to corrupting influences, particularly during the Dark Ages when the precepts and institutions clearly described in scripture fell into 'an illiberal superstition' under the Jesuits and the Pope. Robertson calls the canon law of the Dark Ages, "... the tool of corrupt priests ... one of the most formidable engines ever formed against the happiness of civil society."[350] Rather than encouraging followers to strive for virtue and sanctity, "... which alone can render men acceptable to the Great Author of order and excellence, ..."[351] Rome's emphasis on the observation of external ceremony brought disgrace to reason, and dangerously compromised individual character.

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[348] Wright, Lachman, Meek, and de S. Cameron (eds), The Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), p. 620.
[349] Published as a prelude to The History of Charles V.
[350] Robertson, William, A History of the Progress of Society in Europe, p. 63, in Robertson, William, The History and Reign of the Emperor Charles V (Glasgow: Chapman and Lang, 1800), 10th edition in 4 Vols.
[351] Ibid. p. 22.

Robertson's published sermon, delivered to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian knowledge (SPCK) on 6 January 1755, is curious in its lack of theological emphasis. The sermon, *The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance*, argues that God chose the most opportune historical moment to reveal the Gospel during the era of Augustus, as Rome enjoyed the fruits and confronted the obligations of its expanding empire. Just as the Roman Empire destroyed political and cultural impediments to the progress of Christianity through its commercial and civic power, so Britain might do the same. Roman order, combined with the monotheistic and messianic influences of the Jewish Diaspora, paved the way for revelation. The negative influences of Rome's superstition and enthusiasm, and the superstition of extreme Jewish sects, compounded the need for God's steadying revelation at precisely the time Christ appeared.

Beyond this historical justification for revelation, theology is not formally addressed. Robertson points out that Christianity "... not only sanctifies our soul, but refines and adorns the present."[352] With an eye on the proselytising nature of the SPCK, and his own wish to awaken others to the truths of the Protestant faith, he concludes with a reminder of European hegemony in enlightened scientific and cultural inquiry.

Discussion of religion in Robertson's History of America (1777) includes examination of the polytheism of Peruvian and Mexican tribes, as well as the

religion of the more primitive Amerindian peoples.[353] While examining Mexican religious habits, Robertson criticises the acceptance of belief on instruction rather than through rational inquiry. The Mexicans have "... neither the leisure nor capacity for entering into the path of refined and intricate speculation which conducts to the knowledge of the principles of natural religion."[354] The spectacular natural phenomena that form the basis for supernatural superstition are perceived through the mind, or reason, augmented by imagination.[355] Unity of belief and greater degrees of social progress allow, "... more just and adequate conceptions of the power that presides in nature."[356]

The authority of Incan sovereigns and divines was absolute. Royal decrees were tantamount to divine commands, therefore, "Obedience becomes a duty of religion."[357] This serves to promote "... simple manners and unsuspicious faith."[358] The homage paid to the sun as life's ultimate source of creation and fertility, dominating a system incorporating the moon and stars, seems to resemble Robertson's admiration for the evolution of the theory of the Godhead among the Brahmins in India. Within the Inca system, a harmonious unity underscores social bonds not felt among Mexicans. Harmony encourages

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[352] Robertson, William, 'The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance ..., a Sermon given to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge' (Edinburgh: E. Balfour, 1791), pp. 48-49.
[353] Discussion of the Amerindian religion appears in book four of The History of America.
[354] Robertson, William, The History of America (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1777), Vol. I, p. 380.
[355] Ibid., p. 382: imagination is described as "... a more forward and ardent faculty of the mind ...".
[356] Ibid., p. 384.
[357] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 308.
[358] Ibid., p. 309.

virtuous social attachments, promoting a sense of honourable community and love of country.[359]

Ultimately Robertson retains a comparative advantage over his audience concerning his complete understanding of religion. He finds it useful to emphasise how natural religion legitimised central authority and the values proceeding from it. When considered rationally, it becomes clear that the Gospel offers grace and supreme salvation; yet in daily life, as we will see in his commentary on India, Christians seem to be weaker than their Hindu counterparts in terms of their susceptibility to prejudice and intolerance.

Both natural and revealed religion, and indeed stoicism, attempted to address universal values that transcend the political confines of the *polis* or society, and it is here that one begins to touch on the true utility of religion for Robertson. His quest for universal truths overshadowed theological speculation, and became more urgent as the effects of the diversification of commercial society became apparent with the growth of empire. Diversification brought with it hard moral choices for governments and individual citizens. As Polybius the Stoic had warned centuries before, the wealthier a commonwealth became, the more difficult it was to maintain its virtue and order. Yet Robertson was determined to do so. Ultimately Christianity triumphed over natural religion, but natural religion provided useful information about how religion operated in society and how universal values served the wider purposes of humanity. A language of

[359] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 411.

convergence between revealed truths, natural religion and civic virtue was still required and stoicism filled that need.

iii

The Appealing Order and Tranquility of Indian Society

Robertson's An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India is difficult to place within the historian's canon. The Disquisition was published in 1791, two years before Robertson died, and shows marked differences in structure, tone and style from earlier books. It is a programmatic rather than a narrative history, offering a lengthy consideration of Indian religion and society through study of the caste system and civil authority proceeding from divine origins. Although he acknowledged its fundamental inequality, Robertson seemed particularly taken with the caste system's effectiveness in maintaining established order despite its foundation in superstition.

Geoffrey Carnall reminds readers that the Disquisition was inspired by Robertson's reading of James Rennell's Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan (1788). Robertson extended Rennell's history to include a broad review and analysis of commercial transactions between Europe and the Indian subcontinent.[360] Carnall

[360] Robertson was a firm advocate of the civilising powers of commerce. A.O. Hirschman has argued persuasively that Robertson followed in the tradition of Montesquieu as an influential exponent of *doux commerce*, that gradual 'gentle' form of commercial action that extended across civilised societies, encouraging refinement and cultivation of manners as prosperity increased. In a draft of The History of the Reign of Charles V, Robertson wrote, "... Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men. It unites them, by one of the strongest ties, the desire of supplying their mutual wants. It disposes them to peace, by establishing in every state an order of citizens, bound by their interest to be the guardians of publick tranquillity. As soon as the commercial

also suggests that Robertson "... appeared more strongly engaged by the materials collected in the appendix on 'the genius, the manners, and institutions of the people of India' ..."[361] than in the main body of its history. Robertson explained this preference when addressing the true motivating force driving European commerce with India, that of appreciating:

> "... the superior improvement of its inhabitants. Many facts have been transmitted to us, which, if they are examined with proper attention, clearly demonstrate, that the natives of India were not only more early civilised, but had made greater progress in civilisation than any other people."[362]

Indian society enjoyed the hallmarks of progress in the arts and sciences that were prerequisites for attaining the 'wisdom of the East', and inclusion among the ranks of civilised societies. This was primarily due to the 'spreading of refinement' and the distinction of social classes imposed by the caste system, which was "... one of the most undoubted proofs of a society considerably advanced in its progress."[363] The caste system prescribed the social role played by each citizen from birth. The permanency of the system underscored its

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spirit begins to acquire vigor, its wars, and its negociations. Conspicuous proofs of this occur in the history of the Italian state, of the Hanseatick league, and the cities of the Netherlands during the period under review. In proportion as commerce made its way into the different countries of Europe, they successively turned their attention to those objects, and adapted those manners, which occupy and distinguish polished nations." (See Robertson, William, The History of the Reign of Charles V, NLS NE.526.e.16, quoted in Hirschman, A.O., The Passions and the Interests (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 60-62.

[361] Carnall, Geoffrey, 'Robertson and contemporary images of India', in Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire, chapter 10, pp. 210-11.

[362] Robertson, William, An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India (2nd edition, 1794), facsimile reprint in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. X, p. 229.

[363] Ibid., p. 230. Robertson adheres to Smith's division of labour thesis through the Appendix.

stabilising influence upon Indian society.[364] By extension, it also defined the scope within which public virtue operated.

The Brahmin caste, Robertson reminded his readers, lay at the heart of this system. Its members were "... deemed the most sacred, ..." and "... had it for their province, to study the principles of religion; to perform its functions; and to cultivate the sciences. They were the priests, the instructors, and philosophers of the nation."[365] They provided society with the holy men, who personified a profound mixture of religion and civil authority. Only on occasion did the more pious of the rajahs embody these ties to the same extent.

Because the caste system was enforced by civil law and ordained by religious order, the authority of the Brahmins was immutable. The lower orders served useful purposes within the confines of their designated stations. Robertson acknowledged that the regulations of caste policy "... must necessarily, at some times, check genius in its career, and confine to the functions of an inferior cast, talents fitted to shine in an higher sphere."[366] Yet the Indian's ready acceptance of his station in life allowed him to concentrate form the earliest possible moment on the development of skills that provided his livelihood. Robertson explained this process:

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[364] The division of caste were as follows: 1) Brahmin; 2) Ruler & Magistrates; 3) Husbandman & Merchants; and 4) Artisans, Labourers & Servants.
[365] Robertson, William, An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India. (2nd edition, 1794), facsimile reprint in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. X, p. 231.
[366] Ibid., p. 233.

"The human mind bends to the law of necessity, and is accustomed, not only to accommodate itself to the restraints which the condition of its nature, or the institutions of its country, impose, but to acquiesce in them."[367]

While Westerners may recoil at the notion of so rigidly structured a social system, particularly one that restrains individual inventiveness, Robertson suggests that it is in the organisation of the classes that India's wealth and prosperity rested. Each of the four castes fulfilled established duties of production or administration, guaranteeing a regular flow of staple goods and service throughout society. From this enviable vantage point, Robertson continued, India could turn its attention to trading with the outside world.

Perhaps more important, the fixed nature of the caste system sustained the institutions of Indian society and the manners of its people. Neither foreign invasion nor foreign domination had altered the fundamental fabric of Indian society. Since the emergence of the caste system, this was due to the constancy of its social, economic and political institutions, all of which were influenced, if not defined, by Hinduism and the clear divisions of civil society. The production of goods, the supply of wants, were unaffected by domestic political events. This stability reassured India's trading partners, and enhanced the appeal of Indian commerce.

For all of its efficiency, Robertson believed, the caste system also had significant deficiencies that were concentrated primarily in the caste system's failure to protect the rights of citizens 'in a social state'. However, according to the

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[367] ibid., p. 234.

Brahmins, the interests of individuals were guarded by adhering to the system itself. Citizens were shielded from the excesses of princely power by the fact that monarchs were nearly always members of the second caste, therefore subservient to the Brahmins. In the discussion Robertson gives of the relationship between the sovereigns and the Brahmins, the full scope of their power becomes clear.

As 'ministers of religion' and 'teachers of wisdom', Brahmins were deemed sacred by the members of all other castes. Their persons were inviolate and exempt from capital punishment under any circumstances. They were to be models of virtue, who enjoyed the right to be consulted on all matters of political, social or religious significance. They were free to reprimand unruly princes and other civil rulers, although these civil leaders guarded their own privileges and jurisdictions jealously. Robertson gives the impression that the divisions of responsibility (and labour) among the upper ranks of Indian society were as fortuitous as those of the lower ones. Order was served best by clarity of duty and responsibility at every level.

While Brahmins enjoyed superior status, and standards of superior virtue were expected of them, virtuous behaviour was not limited to their rank. Benevolent princes occasionally appeared on the scene. Junior level administrators, who took responsibility over time for the administration of vast remote provinces, often governed 'with moderation and equity'. Princes were frequently, and correctly, viewed as patriarchs:

"A Hindoo Rajah, ..., resembles more a father presiding in a numerous family of his own children, than a sovereign ruling over inferiors, ... He endeavours to secure their happiness with vigilant solicitude; ... . We can hardly conceive men to be placed in any state more favourable to their acquiring all the advantages derived from social union."[368]

Robertson admired the ease and security that India's paternalistic social system fostered. The caste system served to free the citizen's mind from commonplace concerns and permitted them to contemplate the level of progress achieved in their country. It is only among people "... in the most improved state of society, ... that we discover institutions similar to those ..." of India.[369] Many civilised nations failed to match India's level of social harmony and effective government. A civilisation's progress is measured by its 'political constitution' and by the 'spirit of laws' that protect society. Despite the fact that India relied upon its own common law that evolved over centuries rather than upon positive statutes in a European sense, "... justice was dispensed among them with great accuracy, and ... crimes were most severely punished.[370]

In short, Robertson spends considerable time in the opening of the Appendix making the case that Indian society derived significant benefits from its long history of social unity. Though this unity was imposed through a hierarchy of ranks dating from primitive times, the fruits of Indian civilisation far outweighed problems of inequality or uneven distribution of riches. In the end, Indians were

[368] Ibid., p. 244.
[369] Ibid., p. 246-7.
[370] Ibid. p. 248. Robertson's English readers would have appreciated the appeal to common law.

"... an enlightened commercial people ..."[371] whose society, though pagan, offered the Scots a useful model for achieving opulence and unity through material and social diversity.

iv

Indian Religion and Nature of the Brahmins' Public Virtue

Robertson's analysis of India's social structure sets the stage for his examination of the religion and manners of the Indian people. Robertson continued to catalogue the accomplishments of Indian society, focussing on progress in architecture and in the 'mechanical arts' of linen manufacturing, the dying of cloth, precious metal work and the engraving of gems.[372] However the most convincing evidence of the refinement of Indian culture came in the mastery of literature, drama and fine arts.

In addition to their role as guardians of public order, the Brahmins were responsible for safeguarding intellectual life and culture. Indeed, for Robertson, this seems to be their most crucial role; it adds a cultural dimension to the essentially political form of public virtue discussed earlier. The Brahmins conducted learning experiments and recorded all matters of scientific and artistic interest. Because their books were written in Sanskrit, and the Brahmins prevented foreigners from learning that language for centuries, only in recent

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[371] Robertson, William, An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India. (2nd edition, 1794), facsimile reprint in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. X, p. 253.

[372] Robertson praised the accomplishments of the Aztec civilisation in similar terms.

memory did Westerners gain access to relevant texts. This permitted a new appreciation of the elegance of Indian literature, particularly exemplified in *The Maharabat,* an epic poem that Robertson admired and that touched upon a variety of moral, philosophical and spiritual themes.[373]

To prevent tensions arising from matters of faith and methods of rational inquiry, the Brahmins distinguished between science and religion in their intellectual deliberations. They, like the Greeks after them, divided science into logic, ethics and physics (nature). They developed a sophisticated understanding of the 'distinction between matter and spirit' illustrating that Hinduism's deeply rooted superstition did not compromise the richness of its spiritual dimensions. There is, wrote Robertson, "no description of the human soul … more suited to the dignity of its nature than that given by the author of the Mahabarat."[374] But the Brahmins necessarily distinguished the soul from ethics.

> "This science, which has for its object, to ascertain what distinguishes virtue from vice, to investigate what motives should prompt men to act, and to prescribe rules for the conduct of life, as it is of all others the most interesting … ."[375]

Among the Brahmins decisions concerning ethical matters varied. In views which seemed similar to those of the Stoics, Brahmins agreed that man was

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[373] This analysis makes the Brahmins sound like people Robertson thought the Moderates should have resembled. To the extent that Robertson was impressed by the sophistication of the Brahmin's intellectual endeavours, this is a reasonable suggestion.

[374] Robertson, William, An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India. (2nd edition, 1794), facsimile reprint in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. X, p. 282: "'Some,' says he, 'regard the soul as a wonder, others hear of it with astonishment, but no one knoweth it. The weapon divideth it not; the fire burneth it not; the water corrupteth it not; the wind drieth it not way; for it is indivisible, inconsumable,

created for and defined by action, with the greatest satisfaction in life derived from work towards the common good. Individuals need not concern themselves with the consequences of actions, nor were people permitted to act in ways contrary to their fundamental nature to serve civil society. In obeying nature, people contributed to the maintenance of social harmony. The challenge for each person involved overcoming passions that interfered with personal and social tranquility. It was essential to concentrate on the means of life and action rather than the ends. These rules for life were given to the Maharabat teaching:

"... that the distinguishing doctrines of the Stoic school were taught in India many ages before the birth of Zeno, and inculcated with a persuasive earnestness nearly resembling that of Epictetus; and it is not without astonishment that we find the tenets of this manly active philosophy, ..., prescribed as the rule of conduct to a race of people more eminent ... for the gentleness of their disposition than for the elevation of their minds."[376]

Following further praise for the sophistication of the Brahmins' exploration of physics and astronomy, Robertson put it to his readers that the British had a unique opportunity to enhance communication with the Brahmins as their cultural capital, Benares,[377] was under British dominion. Direct contact with the Brahmins was therefore feasible, and he suggested that the government appoint an appropriate person, skilled in Sanskrit and science, to devote himself to the task.

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incorruptible; it is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable; it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable'."

[375] Ibid., p. 285.

[376] Ibid., p. 287.

[377] Robertson referred to Benares as the 'Athens of India'.

Robertson shifts focus rather suddenly to a consideration of Indian superstition in section VI of the Appendix. He stated that superstition was:

"... strengthened and upheld by every thing which can excite the reverence and secure the attachment of the people. ... The rites and ceremonies of their worship are pompous and splendid, and the performance of them not only mingles in all the more momentous transactions of common life, but constitutes an essential part of them."[378]

The Brahmins (and rajahs) enjoyed complete dominion over the minds of their people through the exercise of these rites, illustrating further their awareness of the depths of their power. Robertson leaves aside a detailed account of the Hindu system of gods as this might detract from the more significant point of divinely-imparted historical authority, etc.; but, he wishes to sketch, 'the history and progress of superstition and false religion' with a view to how similar developments occur elsewhere.

The sketch opens with a discussion of true religion versus superstition, saying that in the earliest stages of societies, systems of superstitious faiths are founded upon inherited mythologies.[379] Primitive societies had very limited capacities with which to comprehend rational religion, a synonym for true religion in this case. Early man had no need for abstract reasoning or scientific inquiry in daily life: these had no bearing on his natural condition or habits. It was unnecessary to question the motives of a Creator of the Universe within primitive cultures, let

[378] Ibid., p. 301.
[379] Ibid., p. 303. Robertson explains: "True religion is as different from superstition in its origin, as in its nature. The former is the offspring of reason cherished by science, and attains to its highest perfection in ages of light and improvement. Ignorance and fear give birth to the latter, and it is always in the darkest periods that it acquires the greatest vigour."

alone for early man to attempt to form an idea of that Creator's nature. Only as minds are broadened in society, through experience and refinement, do these kinds of questions evolve.[380]

But like Blair, Robertson argues the human mind is "formed for religion"[381] and is capable of improvement through the "reception of ideas."[382] Hence the evolution of the polite commercial citizen. The larger point parallels Hume's Natural History of Religion in that events unfold according to nature's plan regardless of man's intercession: it is his happy lot to prosper from nature's beneficence. Imagination moves one beyond the rudimentary stages of history. Through imagination early man conceived "... an idea of one superintending mind, capable of arranging and directing all the various operations of nature... ."[383] His mind searched for the causes and effects of action, like storms occurring or fire burning. Primitives then ascribed the powers associated with actions and causes to the separate powers of multiple deities. Therefore, like Hume, Robertson directly correlates the number of deities with societal advancement.

A primary benefit of true religion is that it is devoid of superstition and ceremony, giving men "... a standard of perfect excellence, which they should have always in their eye, and endeavour to resemble, it may be said to bring down virtue from heaven to earth, and to form the human mind after a divine

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[380] Ibid., p. 304. Robertson writes: "The idea of creation is so familiar, wherever the mind is enlarged by science, and illuminated by revelation, that we seldom reflect how profound and abstruse the idea is, or consider what progress man must have made in observation and research, before he could arrive at any distinct knowledge of this elementary principle in religion."
[381] Ibid., p. 304.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid., p. 306.

model."[384] In false religions, the developmental process is reversed. Men define divine abilities and identities within the context of the single reference available to them, their own self-images.

Robertson then returns to the Brahmins. For all of the sophistication of their caste, the Brahmins were not entirely virtuous as individuals.[385] As the servants of superstition, they were capable of licentiousness. This tended to manifest itself in certain religions rites which fell prey to sensual influences. The seclusion of the pagoda led to practices that were not always chaste. But Robertson moderated his criticism by observing that, "In our reasonings concerning religious opinions and practices which differ widely from our own, we are extremely apt to err."[386] He reminded the reader that ancient Greeks and Romans succumbed to similar temptations that exaggerated ritual but often expressed a genuine religious zeal among a people.

Robertson next discussed scientific influences in Hinduism, pointing to speculation as "... always favourable to truth, but fatal to error."[387] The value of scientific inquiry comes in refining religion, and by extension, society. Robertson writes of the benefits gained through philosophers "of enlarged views,

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[384] Ibid., p. 308.
[385] It should be noted that Robertson does not clearly identify the precise type of virtue Hinduism recommended. Generally Robertson emphasises those characteristics in members of Hindu society that promote public virtue, and he is critical of the private virtue of the Brahmins vis-à-vis their acceptance of superstition and their corruptible moral decision-making powers. It is virtue as obedience to the established order in Hinduism that seems to appeal to Robertson most. It is also unclear from Robertson's discussion about how a rather static form of public virtue in the form of obedience to the status quo encourages progress in society.
[386] Robertson, William, An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge the Ancients Had of India (2nd edition, 1794), facsimile reprint in Smitten, Jeffrey (ed.), The Collected Works of William Robertson, Vol. X, p. 313.
[387] Ibid., pp. 315-16.

sensible of the impiety of the popular superstition," forming "... ideas concerning the perfections of one Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, as just and rational as have ever been attained by the unassisted powers of the human mind."[388] Among the Brahmins, inquiry had led to an appreciation of the harmony of the natural order and of the omnipotence of its supreme Author, culminating in a profession of belief in the unity of the Godhead.

The Appendix closes with an examination of incarnation and the Hindu belief in the Godhead as an all-pervading soul in nature. This defining spirit provided the common source for all life, which Robertson later points out parallels aspects of Stoic thought. The Pundits, translators of Hindu legal codes, wrote:

"... that it was the Supreme Being, who, by his power formed all creatures of the animal, vegetable, and material world, from the four elements of fire, water, air, and earth, to be an ornament to the magazine of creation; and whose comprehensive benevolence selected man, the center of knowledge, to have dominion and authority over the rest; and, having bestowed upon this favourite object judgement and understanding, gave him supremacy over the corners of the world."[389]

From their ability to appreciate the unity of the Godhead through rational processes came the best indication that the Brahmins deserved special esteem among primitive peoples. It also hints at the notion that the best among them must have recognised the fallibilities of superstition.

"To men capable of forming such ideas of Deity, the public service in the Pagodas must have appeared to be an idolatrous worship of images, ...; and they

[388] Ibid., p. 317.
[389] Ibid., p. 320.

must have seen that it was only by sanctity of heart, and purity of manners, men could hope to gain the approbation of a Being perfect in goodness. This truth Veias labours to inculcate in the Mahabarat, but with prudent reserve, and artful precautions, natural to a Brahmin, studious neither to offend his countrymen, nor to diminish the influence of his own order."[390]

Robertson indicated, however, that in these theological matters both the Stoics and the Hindus make incorrect basic assumptions due to their lack of Christian Revelation.[391] Without Divine revelation, all people suffered certain degrees of ignorance. The fact that the ancient Brahmins were ignorant of the Gospel could not be held against them. However, they could be faulted for the manner in which they preserved their power and influence by deliberately manipulating the amount of knowledge disseminated to lesser castes. Robertson's underlying point seems to be that by determining levels of knowledge in society, all authorities regulate conduct to a greater or lesser degree through superstition. Judging from the tone of the relevant passages, this is distasteful in Robertson's mind, but he shrinks from saying that such manipulation can never be considered virtuous.

Science liberates but in India objective inquiry was manipulated by religious leaders for illiberal ends. In the absence of the highest form of virtue that prevents the abuse of political authority, the Brahmins simply secured their

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[390] Ibid., pp. 323-24.

[391] He wrote, "These doctrines of the Brahmins, concerning the Deity, as the soul which pervades all nature, giving activity and vigour to every part of it, as well as the final reunion of all intelligent creatures to the primaeval source, coincide perfectly with the tenets of the Stoic School. it is remarkable, that after having observed a near resemblance in the most sublime sentiments of their moral doctrine, we should likewise discover such a similarity in the errors of their theological speculations." (See the Appendix pp. 326-27). It is interesting for our purposes to note that Robertson's note for this passage seems to come from Lipsius, "Lipsij. Physiol. Stoicor.ib.i.dissert. vii. xxi. Seneca, Antoninus, Epictetus, passim."

power based through the generations, corrupting the tenets of true faith in the process.[392]

Robertson's interest in Hinduism is never directly explained, although he suggested that his observations may prove useful in encouraging a justified appreciation of Indian civilisation among Europeans. Despite his commitment to empire, he seemed alarmed by feelings of European superiority over inhabitants of conquered lands, and he wished to foster respect for the natural rights of those in advanced civilisations.[393] Be that as it may, Indian society was fundamentally flawed in its moral dependency upon a superstitious system of religion. Hindu manners were static. Progress as the Scots understood it was not encouraged in the caste system, nor was it considered beneficial. The virtue of the Brahmins was a by-product of a received mythology and social structure formed in the infancy of Indian history that perpetuated order, but restrained the impetus to improvement essential to Enlightened virtue. Because the highest form of public virtue must include an element of providential revelation, the Brahmins' public virtue remained admirable but deficient.

The Appendix's overarching themes emphasises religion's utility as an essential part of any established polity. Its utility gives religion historical validity regardless of the different theological preference that prevailed in different societies at different times. Avenues proceeding from scientific inquiry, rather

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[392] Yet Robertson also noted that the Brahmins preserved the social order. The problem in Indian society was one of balance between liberty and order; progress and continuity.
[393] Stewart J. Brown had recently suggested that in his disapproval of European feelings of superiority over conquered peoples, Robertson may have been responding to the excesses of

than formal theological ones, are Robertson's chosen means for determining religion's role in civil society. The practical utility of the Brahmins' cultural authority outweighs criticisms of their excesses despite the fact that their system runs contrary to notions of progress favoured by the literati of Western Europe.

Robertson's continual reference to pious behavior linked with political obedience calls to mind his concern with Presbyterian authority in Scotland, and solidifying loyalty to the Whig-Hanoverian succession. Despite an acknowledgement of the superiority of a complete public virtue, there are hints of a delicate equilibrium in Robertson's mind between classical political public virtue and a broader culturally-based public virtue that exemplifies the spirit of Moderate Christian stoicism. This supports Richard Sher's placement of civic humanism at the centre of Robertson's Moderatism, while suggesting that in Robertson's mind tensions need not exist between the two. The picture Robertson paints of an ideal form of public virtue in India seems to reach beyond civic virtue in a political sense; in this sense it seems to be progressive rather than static in character. It is rooted in faith, enhanced by experience, strengthened by speculation and supportive of a broad disciplined world view.

Spain in America. See the introduction to Brown, Stewart J. (ed.), William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire, pp. 5-6.

A Discussion of Jeffrey Smitten on

Robertson's Universal World View: Avoiding Sharp 'Angles of System'

Robertson realized that The History of India would be his last published work, and he openly expressed his hope that the book would recommend his tolerant universal views to a wider European audience.[394] Perhaps, then, the manner in which he discussed religion in India has added significance in that it conveyed a deeper historical message embodying the core of Moderatism. In his emphasis on universal truths and tolerant themes, Robertson avoided making final judgements about the intrinsic value of Indian culture. Though he praised the usefulness of public virtue as it was manifested within the caste structure, he warned against the sort of religious absolutism practised by the Brahmins. The more abstract notions of universalism that underscored the commercial spirit Robertson wished to engender never detracted from the practical considerations of daily life, nor did the challenges of practical life dissuade him of his universal values.

His history intends to provoke discussion about the substance of religion, commerce and culture rather than to promote theocracy of any kind. The lack of

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[394] See Robertson quoted by Dugald Stewart in Stewart, Dugald, Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D. See p. 167: Robertson speaking publicly, "I own, however, that I have all along kept in view an object more interesting, as well as of greater importance; and entertain hopes, that if the account which I have given ... of India, ..., shall be received as just and well established, it may have some influence upon the behaviour of Europeans toward the people. ... If I might presume to hope, that the description I have given of the manners and institutions of the people of India could contribute in the smallest degree, ..., to render their character more respectable, ..., I should close my literary labours with the satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived or written in vain."

an evangelical or proselytising tone in the main body of the History or in the Appendix is not coincidental. Place these priorities within and eighteenth-century Scottish context, and one immediately recognises the Moderate agenda to promote unity within their own ranks, in the Church, and in society as a whole, by diminishing all sources of ideological and social controversy. Essential to the undertaking is the maintenance of a balanced method of persuasion that charts a middle ground between scepticism and blind faith; philosophy and theology; self-interest and the public good. The History of India confirms Robertson's life-long preference for stoicism as the 'language of convergence' among these parts; yet readers are still left with a rather general intimation about the mingling of Christian and stoic principles. This is entirely compatible with the Moderates' insistence upon reducing areas of potential conflict, but what are the implications of failing to address the specific relationship between Christianity and stoicism? Was Moderate Christian Stoicism weakened from the outset by its lack of specificity?

Robertson would argue no. Christian stoicism accommodated the central tenets of the Gospel, as well as the business of speculation and improvement essential in civilised commercial society. As we know the intellectual scepticism that fuelled rational inquiry brought them dangerously close to the edge of heresy in orthodox eyes. The Moderates were deeply sensitive to accusations of heterodoxy insofar as such charges carried an implied challenge to the Church established, not least to charges of Arminianism. Doctrinally, however, the fact that they stopped short of encouraging Humean scepticism in matters of faith seems to have satisfied any unease they may have felt privately about theological problems. If Jeffrey

Smitten is correct in maintaining that Robertson was deeply influenced by continental Arminianism, then Robertson must have reflected upon theology even if it were not his priority.

Smitten develops his arguments against a backdrop of diverse opinion among Enlightenment historians about the degree to which the Moderates were affected by seventeenth-century continental (Dutch) theology. Hugh Trevor-Roper argued that under Moderate influence, the Church of Scotland was 'de-Calvinized' as a result of 'repudiating ideological orthodoxy' of the seventeenth century.[395] More recently Henry Sefton maintained that the Moderates were not indebted to continental theology at all, but refrained categorically from taking any side in doctrinal matters.[396] Smitten rejects both interpretations, and places the question of Arminian influence in a socio-political context by stressing Robertson's acceptance of sceptical epistemology and a "... synergetic view of the relationship between human action and divine providence ...".[397]

Reviewed broadly, the intellectual appeal of Aminianism rested it its denial of the doctrine of Election, and in its extension of the possibility of salvation to all the faithful. Arminianism affirmed a far greater scope for the exercise of individual free will than did orthodox Calvinism, and it thus provided the philosophical

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[395] Trevor-Roper, Hugh, 'The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment', in Trevor-Roper, Hugh, The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change (New York: Harper, 1968), 205, as quoted in Smitten, Jeffrey, 'The Shaping of Moderation: William Robertson and Arminianism', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 22 (1992), pp. 281-82.

[396] Sefton, Henry, "'Neu-lights and Preachers Legall': Some Observations on the Beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland," in Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929, (ed.) MacDougall, N. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983).

foundation for greater human agency in society and history. Their emphasis on free will also underscored the Arminians' advocacy of a qualified religious toleration. They encouraged toleration among dissenting traditions in terms of the exercise of rites and ceremonies, although this toleration did not flow beyond Christian ranks.

The Arminian context Smitten describes offers fertile ground in which to root Robertson's epistemological priorities, with their emphasis on the limitations of reason and need for balanced inquiry. He makes the point persuasively that Arminianism provided Robertson with the means of 'obscuring' theological controversy to achieve immediate social goals. In its plea for toleration, it could also be argued that Arminianism may have facilitated the Moderate attack on the divisive tenets of particularism inherent in the legacy of seventeenth-century covenanting Calvinism. Particularism's separation of Scottish society into a multiplicity of reformed versus unreformed, and Presbyterian versus Episcopal, groupings, splintered the nation to an unacceptable degree. Furthermore it shifted attention away from real problems of economic rejuvenation and the re-establishment of political stability.

The Arminian paradigm facilitates the promulgation of Robertson's principles, it analyses parts of Robertson's intellectual methodology, but it falls short of addressing comprehensively the universal quality of Robertson's faith and world-view. For this a parallel paradigm seems necessary, one that lends itself to

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[397] Smitten, Jeffrey, 'The Shaping of Moderation: William Robertson and Arminianism', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 22 (1992), p. 282.

broader spiritual dimensions while accommodating matters of human reason, will, agency and experience. It may be that Augustine's weaving together of elements of stoic ethics and Christian revelation with the Neo-Platonic position that philosophy was a preparatory tool for faith provides another avenue of exploration.[398] The constant juxtaposition of faith and understanding highlighted the tensions and apparent contradiction between assent and blind faith that so troubled Enlightenment figures.

Augustine's defence of the human mind's capability of discerning truth, and his location of the moral sense in the soul inextricably tied the functioning of reason to reflecting God's omnipresence in the cosmological order. Nature, by extension, was a manifestation of that order. Faith transcended the boundaries of rationality, ultimately regulating human identity and endeavour. The association, therefore, between the mind and soul testified to the guidance of Providence in intellectual, empirical and spiritual matters, and anticipates the central role Reformed theologians, and the Moderates, assigned to Providence.

Smitten suggests that Robertson's histories should be viewed as 'enactments of Moderatism', characterised by balanced judgements and the constant recommendation of toleration for other cultures and forms of human experience.[399] In indirect support of Smitten's point, John Dwyer argues that

[398] It is useful to bear in mind that Augustinian influences permeated Scottish intellectual life since Carmichael and Hutcheson's day.
[399] These characteristics also reflect Robertson's strong sympathy with stoicism.

Robertson played a key role in shifting the Moderates' "conceptual anchor"[400] from revelation to 'social community'. This implied a disassociation of Moderate notions of 'social community', or civil society, from religion that is problematic from our point of view. But the wider point that Robertson defended his ideals within the context of Arminianism's intellectual legacy is useful. In terms of historical writing and subtle polemics, the Moderates had no finger exponent. Smitten concludes that while some of Robertson's contemporary readers objected to his Arminian tone, they none the less appreciated his persuasive rhetorical style, for:

"... when Robertson, who because he 'rather inclined to the Arminian side ... would have been less acceptable to the body of the people,' handled 'the peculiar doctrines of Christianity,' he worked to keep clear of the 'angles of system, by which means such as disliked his politics, were often delighted' as well as 'instructed by his discourses'."[401]

It is precisely in this ground, the avoidance of 'angles of system', that the appeal of stoicism is embedded. As a "lover of mankind" and in expressing his "love of the human species",[402] and indeed as a Christian, anything less than the identification of a language of universal truths was unacceptable to Robertson.

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[400] Dwyer, John, 'The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Moderate Divines', in Dwyer, John (ed.), New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), p. 298.
[401] NLS MS 1636, ff. 220-222 quoted in Smitten, Jeffrey, 'The Shaping of Moderation: William Robertson and Arminianism', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 22 (1992), p. 293.
[402] From letters from Robertson to W. Strahan quoted by Dugald Stewart in Stewart, Dugald, Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D., pp. 160-61.

Conclusion

William Robertson shared Hugh Blair's interest in morality, yet both men explored it from very different perspectives. Robertson concentrated on the operating laws of civil society that fostered order and tranquility, and the public virtue proceeding from them. Blair, by contrast, encouraged the cultivation of virtuous characteristics that enhanced personal development, and eased potential social conflict. Blair did so by using a language of religion, Christian Stoicism, that accommodated a stoic ethic of virtue and method, but remained equally committed to the translation of essential classical civic virtues into a body of polite social ethics for the commercial era.[403]

Robertson's Christian Stoicism seems to function in a more abstract fashion than Blair's. Seen through the operation of public virtue in India, it is less tangible though equally powerful. Robertson's Christian Stoicism is not a language of religion so much as a pragmatic spirit of order, tolerance and obligation, completed by faith, that he wished to see accepted throughout Europe.[404] Consequently Robertson's Christian Stoic, if we may call the British citizen of his day such, recognised that civic duties were pre-eminent and retained a strong religious and moral dimension. The matter of virtue now extended beyond leaders to all people who played a part in the new commercial order. Robertson's limited discussion of theological issues leaves readers to assess for themselves

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[403] Given that he referred to Epictetus and Zeno more frequently, it is reasonable to suggest that Robertson's stoicism was more Epictetan than Aurelian in spirit. An Epictetan inspired stoicism should be contrasted with the stoic spirit permeating Blair's sermons. That spirit of stoicism seemed more Senecan in its appreciation for gradual personal and societal improvement.

[404] This description of Robersonian Christian Stoicism is not unlike humanism.

the degrees to which he reconciled stoic and Christian principles. Nevertheless, it is argued here that he made deep connections between the two. These connections bridge moral and epistemological divides proceeding from tensions between philosophy and religion, scepticism and faith.

In Part I and in the concluding comments on Blair, it was argued that aspects of seventeenth-century Dutch Neostoic thought lend themselves to an eighteenth-century Scottish context for Christian Stoicism in terms of addressing the function of religion in commercial society. As we saw, Lipsian Neostoicism addressed tensions between scepticism and faith by suggesting that problems between reason and sentiment were reconcilable to a certain degree. Lipsius, it will be recalled, emphasised the need to identify a co-existence of ethical priorities that underscored the state's role as providing the unifying bond in society. Further, he placed the military at the heart of protecting civil society. While Robertson ultimately assigned that role to the constitutional government, he none the less continued the Neostoic discussion about this convergence of ethical priorities in his investigations of providence, government and the rule of law, not least in his History of India.

If taken as a defence of commerce and empire, the History of India fills a unique place among the Moderate literati's works. Robertson was perhaps their most eloquent apologist, and like his friends, firmly defended the material benefits proceeding from commercial culture. Indeed the positive effects of commerce were discussed between Robertson and Blair:

"... You can best judge whether there be foundation for any general observation of this kind. On Governments I should think the freer and more general intercourse occasioned by Commerce must have tended to lessen the severe despotism which pervaded in the Middle Ages. It certainly had the effect to raise Cities, & ... Citizens, into more consequences; and by diffusing wealth more equally to break & lessen the power of Aristocracy. If it did not alter the political form of any Government, yet by its gradual effects on manners, it tempered the Spirit of Government. Perhaps there might be ground for the same observations of this kind, in favour of the Connexion between extended trade & Liberty."[405]

It is in its universal tone and encouragement of toleration that the History of India is most useful to an investigation of Robertson's interest in Stoicism. At the heart of Robertson's endorsement of universal values is his wish to erode cultural ignorance and religious superstition, which threatened not only European understanding of world cultures, but the sober, balanced, active Christian life he recommended for readers. Charles Camic reminds readers that Robertson insisted that a "human being, as he comes originally from the hand of nature, is everywhere the same,"[406] and that contrary to received Calvinist dogma, all are capable of attaining happiness.[407] Robertson's religious and secular careers embodied this truth, and formed the core of his Christian Stoicism.

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[405] Blair to Robertson, 24 May 1790, NLS MS 3944, f. 20 (Robertson-MacDonald papers).
[406] From History of America quoted in Camic, Charles, Experience and Enlightenment: Socialization for Cultural Change in Eighteenth-Century Scotland (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, pp. 66-7.
[407] It should be noted that theological Calvinists applied the doctrine of Election only to the next world, not to happiness or success in the present world.

Part III

Searching for 'Principle of Connection': the Moderates' Intellectual Debts to Adam Smith with Reference to Christian Stoicism

Introduction

The close association between religion and morality has been a characteristic element of Christian civilisation for two thousand years, but as Christopher Berry reminds readers in his primer on the Scottish Enlightenment, the link between the two has always been 'close without being precise'.[408] We have seen that one of the more enduring challenges to religion and morality came from the rise of commerce in the early modern period, which sparked Enlightenment debate about the degrees to which temptations of materialism could be contained through personal virtue.

From Calvin's time forward, the classic challenge commerce posed to morality revolved around the question: was it possible for an individual to retain his or her moral integrity when dealing in economic and social transactions motivated by self-interest? If so, how did one prevent such activity from degenerating into envy or avarice? Did Christianity have at its disposal a sufficiently sophisticated

[408] Berry, Christopher, Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1977), p. 166.

set of replies to this problem to safeguard its place in the new intellectual order, and more importantly, could the Christian Church define a kind of economy of salvation, or a path towards righteousness, that operated unhindered within the constraints of a profit economy?

We have seen that the Scots chose to reply to this challenge within the context of moral philosophy by investigating the relationship between moral and social theory. The nexus of this relationship was the development of a theory of social values that underscored the empiricists' rejection of purely rational analyses of the motives for moral action. Following David Hume and Adam Smith, the Scottish literati relied upon knowledge based on experience to determine the extent to which one could *know* what constituted a morally correct action.

In adopting this empirical model, the Moderates acknowledged the validity of the central tenets of Smith's ethical theory as presented in his The Theory of Moral Sentiments (*TMS*). The work was in circulation from 1759, i.e., throughout much of the high Moderate period when Blair and Robertson were most active in Edinburgh. Blair and Robertson know of and referred to Smith's work. Their admiration for Smith's moral theory was shared by lesser known members of the Moderate clergy, not least John Drysdale (1718-88), a friend of Smith's since boyhood who became Robertson's protégé in the 1760s.

The acceptance of Smith's theories served as a means of placing religion at the centre of the process to define the ethics of commercial society. However it also posed a fundamental challenge: how were the Moderates to respond to Smith's

emphasis on self-interest as a force in society, and how did Smith's rather different understanding of benevolence square with the Moderates' Christian interpretation of the same? It is argued that in their Christian Stoicism, the Moderates replied to the problem of self-interest through their strict advocacy of virtue. Smith placed similar importance on virtue as a means for improving character and promoting order. However it is well established in Enlightenment historiography that this common commitment to virtue did not necessarily spring from a mutual dedication to established Christianity.

This returns one to a question of fundamental importance to the Moderates. Namely, in accepting the tenets of Smith's ethics, what, if any, were the theological dimensions of Smith's moral theory? While the Moderates may have considered this matter privately, neither Blair, Robertson nor Drysdale left evidence discussing it. We know that Smith raised the question of natural theology during his moral philosophy lectures at Glasgow in the early 1750s, but there are no surviving lecture notes on the subject.[409] Smith's texts do not provide formal answers, therefore any clarifications can only be contextual.

In Part III suggestions will be made about the Moderates' intellectual debts to Smith vis-à-vis Christian Stoicism within the context of his interest in stoicism and by tracing theological dimensions in Smith's moral philosophy. It seeks to do so by introducing another source into current historiographical discussion,

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[409] Se John Millar's account of Smith's moral philosophy lectures in Steward, Dugald, Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, LL.D. (1793) in The Adam Smith Library, Biographical Memoir of Adam Smith (New York: Reprints of Economic Classics, A.M. Kelley Publishers, 1966), pp. 11-13.

albeit an oblique one, in the form of John Drysdale's Sermons. The Sermons are of interest for three reasons: they reflect Drysdale's adoption of many of the themes Smith and John Millar propound concerning the division of social ranks in society; the sermons suggest that Drysdale was influenced by Smith's theory of the impartial spectator; and, they demonstrate that Drysdale shared Smith's passionate dedication to Stoic principles. After discussing corresponding themes in Smith's treatment of stoicism, natural religion and revealed religion at length in chapter six, chapter seven examined Drysdale's sermons in greater detail.

Chapter 6

The Deity and Providential Order: Smith's Image of Natural Theology and His Interest in Stoicism

After the publication of The Wealth of Nations (1776), Adam Smith came to be remembered first as a political economist rather than as a moral philosopher. However The Wealth of Nations was a component of a much larger investigation of human society, and the complex motives that drive human action. Political economy was one of a series of interlocking areas of human activity that interested Smith, although it was in the economic realm that the strongest motives for action were found, namely self-interest and the protection of one's dependents and property. Smith's first published work, The Theory of Moral Sentiments (*TMS*), addressed the highest motives for human activity, those senses of duty, justice and virtue that lent a nobility and purpose to human action and the mechanisms of commercial society.

Smith altered the text of *TMS* considerably during his life time. When the final sixth edition of the book appeared shortly before Smith's death in 1790, he had made substantial changes and additions to his work. Chief among the additions were revised and new passages on stoicism, which reflected the profound influence this ancient school had on Smith in his later years. This influence was

especially pronounced in his reflections on duty and the character of virtue, most notably the virtues of prudence, beneficence and self-command.[410]

The relatively new investigations into Smith's stoicism centre around key themes, which include his advocacy of virtue and justice, and a built-in concept of providence that lent itself both to stoic cosmology and to the Christian notion of a retributive God as a key motivator for acting morally. Smith treated these matters very strictly in the sixth edition of *TMS,* and in successive editions until 1790 when he veered away from making connections between his stoic preferences and corresponding themes in natural theology or revealed religion.

This did not prevent the Moderates from approving of Smith's moral theory, or indeed from continuing to rely on common themes in natural and revealed religion and stoicism to promote their moral agenda. Although Drysdale died two years before the 1790 edition of *TMS* was published, he seemed to find Smith's earlier stoicism broadly compatible with Christian principles, as did Blair. Whether Drysdale and Blair were correct in their assessment is not the immediate concern of this section. Rather it asks how the Moderates might have reached the conclusion that Smith left sufficient room for Christian principles in his moral theory despite the fact that he became increasingly disenchanted with the institutions of organised religion? In order to do this, it is necessary to engage in a limited piece of theoretical history to supply "... fact by

[410] Smith expanded the previous references he made to stoicism in earlier editions of *TMS* in Part VII of the sixth edition. His revised discussion of the sense of duty appeared in Part III, and a new Part VI treated the character of virtue with its emphasis on self-command.

conjecture"[411] by deconstructing and reconstructing Smith in an attempt to find a place for Christianity in his work.

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Organised Religion and the Appeal of Natural Theology

Smith's objections to organised religion rested primarily in his view that throughout history the institutions of Christianity abused their power in society, and clouded them minds of believers with gratuitous ritual and perverse superstition. In Wealth of Nations (*WN*), he attacked the political power of large ecclesiastical institutions, particularly those that engaged in priestcraft or promoted enthusiasm. Established churches tended to breed intolerance for other religious sects, which in turn fostered social division and unrest.

The teachers of the great sects lacked the "candour and moderation"[412] desired of religious leaders in polite society, and they tended to manipulate civil authorities to their own advantage. If, however, a great number of small sects operated in society, none:

> "... could be considerable enough to disturb the publick tranquility. ... The teachers of each little sect, ..., would be obliged to respect those of almost every other sect, and the concessions which they would mutually find it ... convenient and agreeable to make to one another, might in time probably reduce the doctrine of the greater part of them to that pure and rational religion, free from every mixture of absurdity, imposture, or fanaticism, such as wise men have in all ages

[411] Dugald Stewart's description of theoretical history quoted in the general introduction by D.D. Raphael and A.S. Skinner to Smith, Adam, Essays on Philosophical Subjects, (eds) Wightman, W.P.D. and Bryce, J.C. (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982), p. 3.
[412] Smith, Adam, An Inquiry into the Nature of Causes of the Wealth of Nations, (eds) Campbell, R.H. and Skinner, A.S. (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981), Vol. II, p. 793.

of the world wished to see established; but such as positive law has perhaps never yet established, … ."[413]

While no form of ecclesiastical government was conducive to the cultivation of a 'philosophical good temper', sects that promoted virtuous behaviour operating within very loose organisational structures, like the Quakers, contributed to the civil society by encouraging moderation in "… every sort of religious principle."[414] A large number of smaller churches operating in society reduced the possibility of one larger church exercising undue influence within a political establishment. However smaller churches tended to be susceptible to faction, and they often interpreted morality in such rigourous terms that members of their congregation became fanatical. For Smith this was as unacceptable as the domination of a larger ecclesiastical institution:

"Of all the corrupters of moral sentiments … faction and fanaticism have always been by far the greatest."[415]

To counter the 'unsociable' effects of organised religions in society, Smith appealed to the state to diffuse tension among small sects; to restrain the power of established churches; and most importantly, to promote the study of science and philosophy among members of the middling ranks from which society drew its leaders. Ultimately it fell to them to promote Smith's pure rational religion, and to restrain the forces of enthusiasm in society:

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[413] Ibid., pp. 792-3.
[414] Ibid., p. 793.

"Science is the great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition; and where all the superior ranks of people were secured in it, the inferior ranks could not be much exposed to it."[416]

Throughout his discussion of ecclesiastical institutions in *WN*, Smith displayed a profound understanding of the complex relationship between civil and ecclesiastical authorities in commercial society. He strengthened his analysis by placing it within a historical context, highlighting the particularly damaging effects popery had throughout Europe before the eighteenth century. The superstition of Rome counteracted the church's positive role as an educational institution, although Smith continued to acknowledge that religion played a useful role in society by sanctioning and propagating the general rules of moral conduct."[417] He contrasted the Roman Catholic example with the more measured contributions of the Church of Scotland (a smaller sect), which in terms of education produced "... as good effects as Rome with less money."[418] Smith also displayed an extensive knowledge of the Church of Scotland's patronage controversies and discussed Presbytery selection in detail.[419]

Smith's critique of organised religion was powerful in its specificity, and because Smith was careful to distinguish the harmful effects of organised faith from the broader benefits of natural religion. These included a sense of duty and

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[415] Ibid., p. 796.
[416] Ibid.
[417] In *TMS* Smith commented that "... religion, even in its rudest form, gave sanction to the rules of morality, long before the age of artificial reasoning and philosophy. That the terrors of religion should thus enforce the natural sense of duty, was of too much importance to the happiness of mankind, for nature to leave it dependent upon the slowness and uncertainty of philosophical researches." (See Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, III.5.4, p. 164).
[418] Smith, Adam, An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations, Vol. II, p. 813.
[419] See Ibid., pp. 808-15.

responsibility to self and society, and a sense of God operating through nature free from the distractions of superstition.

The Supreme Being of *TMS* bears a distinctive resemblance to the Deity found in Bishop Butler's discussion of natural religion, a Deity who required no mediator to conduct a useful relationship with humanity and whose authority underscored the providential order.[420] While Smith's image of the Author of Nature, and indeed of the correct tone for religious activity, became increasingly stoic in the sixth edition of *TMS*, it is important to bear in mind earlier references to these dimensions of religious life given that the Moderates had access to the texts.

In his examination of the relationship between human morality and a Divine Author in Part II of the last edition of *TMS*, Smith made numerous references to the Deity, most of which present a somewhat benign image of God. Smith's Author of Nature lies at the head of the Providential system, whose original intention for humanity was (and remained) the pursuit of happiness:

"No other end seems worthy of that supreme wisdom and divine benignity which we necessarily ascribe to him; and this opinion, which we are led to by the abstract consideration of his infinite perfections, is still more confirmed by the

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[420] See chapter 3 for a summary of Butler's interest in the relationship between natural and revealed religion. Butler's natural religion was a composite of the naïve faith of Genesis and a religion that prescribed the soul's moral constitution from the time of creation. He guaranteed the exercise of free will within this system; it is guided by a moral sense governed by providential reason. These wide perimeters encompassed all humanity, believers and non-believers alike, in that all were creations of Divine intelligence. See also Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 170: "And wherever the natural principles of religion are not corrupted by the factious and party zeal of some worthless cabal; wherever the first duty which it requires, is to fulfil all the obligations of morality; wherever men are not taught to regard frivolous observances, as more immediate duties of religion, than acts of justice and beneficence; and to imagine, that by sacrifices, and ceremonies, and vain supplications, they can bargain with the Deity for fraud, ..., the world undoubtedly judges right in this respect, and justly places a double confidence in the rectitude of the religious man's behaviour."

examination of the works of nature, which seem all intended to promote happiness, and to guard against misery. But by acting according to the dictates of our moral faculties, we necessarily pursue the most effectual means for promoting the happiness of mankind, and may therefore be said, in some sense, to co-operate with the Deity, and to advance as far as in our power the plan of Providence."[421]

Smith's Deity operated through the laws of nature, in a realm similar to that of First Causes outlined in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Within the realm of First Causes, God officiated through a fore-knowledge of time and history.[422] However, it was the impartial spectator, the 'man within the breast', that regulated behaviour in the external world by determining whether or not actions were worthy of the approval of one's neighbours. Furthermore:

"The all-wise Author of Nature has, in this manner, taught man to respect the sentiments and judgements of his brethren; to be more or less pleased when they approve of his conduct, and to be more or less hurt when they disapprove of it. He has made man, ..., the immediate judge of mankind; and has, in this respect, as in many others, created him after his own image, and appointed him viceregent upon earth, to superintend the behaviour of his brethren."[423]

Because the impartial spectator determined the merit of action based upon a fixed set of moral distinctions rather than upon the judgements of neighbours, it acted

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[421] Ibid., p. 166.
[422] Carruthers, S.W. (ed.), The Westminster Confession of Faith (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1978. Reprint of 1646 edition by Cornelius Burges). See chapter V, p. 7: "God the Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy. ... Although, in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure."
[423] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 128-30.

as a steady arbiter of conduct in daily life.[424] The spectator was a constructed entity, derived from one's first moral standards, and as such was considered separately from conscience. Like Calvin, Smith considered conscience an unreliable moral guide although it reflected a kind of positive impulse of God in the human mind. The conscience was susceptible to the effects of habit and experience in the mind of individuals, which introduced an unacceptable degree of partiality into its operations. Hence Smith's preference for the firm rules of conduct under which the impartial spectator functioned. In the event that the spectator became 'confounded' for any reason, i.e., when a weakness of mind caused one to act without recourse to general opinion, the spectator's only option was to refer to:

> "... that all-seeing Judge of the world, whose eye can never be deceived, and whose judgements can never be perverted. A firm confidence in the unerring rectitude of this great tribunal, before which his innocence is in due time declared, and his virtue to be finally rewarded, can alone support him under the weakness and despondency of his own mind, whom nature has set up as, in this life, the great guardian, not only of his innocence, but of his tranquility."[425]

Turning to the tone of religious activity, John Dwyer has recently argued that in Smith's discussion of the "consonance between human resentment and God's wrath"[426] in Part II of *TMS*, Smith discussed the "... proper *tone* for religious belief"[427] in a markedly Calvinist manner. While it must be pointed out that Smith omitted the following material in his revisions to the sixth edition, it is

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[424] In a sense this implies that it was the spectator that governed conduct within the realm of Second Causes rather than Christ, but Smith did not pursue this matter.
[425] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 131-32.
[426] Dwyer, John, The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 30, see note 49.
[427] Ibid.

likely that the Moderates came across it in their reading of earlier editions. The more traditional image of God put forward in this passage supports the suggestion that through the fifth edition of *TMS*, there were remnants of a Christian Deity in Smith's thought.

It is, therefore, worth quoting Smith at length when he discussed a person appearing before the Deity for final judgement:

"... To such a being, he fears, that his littleness and weakness can scarce ever appear the proper object, either of esteem or of rewards. But he can easily conceive, how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the proper object of aversion and punishment; and he thinks he can see no reason why the divine indignation should not be let loose without any restraint, upon so vile an insect, he imagines that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness, he suspects that he cannot demand it from the justice, but that he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition at the thought of his past conduct, seem, upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and to be the only means which he has left for appeasing that wrath, which he knows, he has justly provoked. ..." Should these fail to appease God, "... Some other intercession, ..., some other atonement, he imagines, must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide, in every respect, with those original anticipations of nature; and, as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they show us, ..., that the most powerful intercession has been made, and that the most dreadful atonement has been paid for our manifold ... iniquities."[428]

While it cannot be said that Smith necessarily held these views at the time of his death, his comments displayed an understanding of the powers that ideas of revelation and a retributive God could exercise on the mind that conformed with traditional Christian interpretations of the same. This would have facilitated the

[428] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, see note to Part II.ii.3.12, pp. 91-92. [This excerpt incorporates corrections Smith made in *TMS* editions 2-5.]

Moderates' acceptance of Smith's morality, as did Smith's general reliance on Providence to strengthen the social order,[429] maintain private virtue and unite human experience with the forces of time and history. Ultimately it seems Smith followed Francis Hutcheson in thinking of religion as an extension of morality, but a morality that could be taught to believers and non-believers alike. If it did not follow that morality was a precursor to religion for Smith personally, this did not detract from the space he left for the Deity in his moral framework.

ii

Further Consideration of Smith's Stoicism

As Smith revealed the full extent to which stoicism influenced his mature thought in the sixth edition of *TMS,* a fuller picture emerged of his natural theology. It was a natural theology that continued to rely upon the forces of Providence and the wisdom of the Creator, but, as stated earlier, the Deity was referred to in increasingly stoic rather than Christian terms.

Before looking at Smith's stoicism in detail, it is important to recall that the philosophical foundation for Smith's stoicism, as for the Scots' overall treatment of virtue and human action, was laid by Francis Hutcheson. Smith and the Moderates benefited from Hutcheson's earlier replies to the egoistic philosophy of Bernard Mandeville and Thomas Hobbes. Hutcheson's development of his theory of a moral sense operating independently of Divine wisdom laid the basis for the Scots to investigate morality through exploring natural sentiments, ideas

[429] The key element of which was the division of society into established ranks.

and virtues. We saw in chapter 3 that Hutcheson's research into the nature of morality involved several key features: the denial of humanity's inherent sinfulness with the implication that morality could not be reduced to a matter of reacting against sin; the rejection of the notion that moral actions are taken through fear of Divine retribution; and, that the moral sense is actually completed by theology, or Christianity, rather than proceeding from it.[430]

These points are important for the Moderates on numerous levels. In the case of denying inherent sinfulness and insisting on the existence of a moral sense, Hutcheson immediately shifted direct responsibility for moral action onto the shoulders of individual citizens. The Moderates developed this theme by emphasising the degree to which individuals as citizens are responsible for the propagation of private and public virtue. This was particularly true for Blair and Drysdale, who, as we shall see, stressed in their sermons the need for individuals to assume direct responsibility for moral undertakings.

Hutcheson's reduction of the degree to which one could interpret moral action as resulting from fear of Divine punishment seemed to diminish the extent to which superstition influenced moral thinking. To suggest that religion or theology completed rather than defined a moral sense implied that the moral sense was universal, and that it was enhanced by faith. All human beings shared the obligation to act in accordance with the moral sense, with the consequence that each person was theoretically capable of virtuous action. That the Moderates

[430] See Haakonssen, Knud, Natural Law and Moral Philosophy, pp. 63-75.

argued for virtue being accessible to all has been clearly demonstrated in earlier chapters.

We have also seen that both Hutcheson and the Moderates invoked stoic principles in their attempts to identify a philosophical *via media* between the extremes of materialism and virtuousness in commercial society. Whether stoicism appealed to Smith for similar reasons, particularly the stoicism that appears in the final revised edition of The Theory of Moral Sentiments, seems unlikely. However it becomes apparent that more needs to be said about the nature of Hutcheson's stoicism, the degree to which he influenced Smith on stoicism, and the Moderates' indebtedness to both thinkers in the development of Christian Stoicism.

Some scholars define Smithian ethics as "... a combination of Stoicism and Hutcheson ... ."[431] The key distinction between Moderate Christian Stoicism as it has been described here and the kind of stoicism that evolves in Smith's thought is that Christian Stoicism retains an element of charitable benevolence apparent in Hutcheson, a type of *caritas*, that Smith rejected. The following sections attempt to analyse these forms of stoicism further, and to trace the role of benevolence in the Christian Stoic and Smithian orders.

[431] See the introduction by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie to Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 6.

A Review of Hutcheson's Interest in Stoicism and His Emphasis of Benevolence

It is well established within Enlightenment historiography that Francis Hutcheson was a practical moralist, who followed in the Ciceronian tradition by encouraging his audience to exercise their moral capacities through the pursuit of the *vita activa*. In his advocacy of civic virtue as a defining element of the political and moral order, Hutcheson followed Cicero, Harrington and the civic humanists closely. It is also accepted that Hutcheson owed significant intellectual debts to the natural law tradition, which had antecedents in Greek and later Roman Stoic philosophy.

Before the development of Grotius' and Pufendorf's theories, natural law flourished under Zeno of Citium, Chrysippus, Cato the Younger, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, who posited the well-known adage that the wise man lived in harmony with nature through the cultivation of a certain detachment from worldly affairs. In their legal thought, the Stoics placed supreme importance upon a universal law of nations or peoples, the *ius gentium*, over individual systems of public or civil law. This anticipated the development of the Neostoic notion that there existed among different peoples a set of universal values that transcended problems of diversity or special interest. This set of values encouraged the fundamental order of civilised societies and the equality of each person before the law. Hutcheson received and endorsed these general precepts,

and blended them with civic humanist priorities to form the context within which he developed his moral theory.

Hutcheson's civic humanist credentials were enhanced by his recognition of the powers of rhetoric, or persuasion, to disseminate classical values and encourage Christian principles. Thomas Miller points out that it is in the introductions to some of Hutcheson's works that one finds immediate references to the value Hutcheson placed not only on the content of Greek and Roman philosophy, but also on the form and style in which the ancients presented their intellectual cases.

In Hutcheson's A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (1747), the professor called upon his students to embrace the challenges of the *vita activa* by looking to 'the inventors and improvers of all ingenious arts, the Greek and Roman writers', who read with the Bible 'adorn your souls with every virtue, prepare yourselves for every honourable office in life, and quench that manly and laudable thirst you should have after knowledge'.[432] The entire scheme of Hutcheson's moral philosophy, Miller correctly argues, is stoic in tone for the weight it gives to living in accordance with 'right reason', and for the value it assigns to practical over speculative experience:

"As all other arts have in view some good to be obtained, as their proper end, Moral Philosophy, which is the art of regulating the whole of life, must have in view the noblest end; since it undertakes, as far as human reason can go, to lead us into that course of life which is most according to the intention of nature, and most happy, to which end whatever we can obtain by other arts should be

[432] Hutcheson quoted in Miller, Thomas P., 'Francis Hutcheson and the Civic Humanist Tradition' in Hook, Andrew and Sher, Richard B. (eds), The Glasgow Enlightenment (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1995), p. 46.

subservient. Moral Philosophy therefore must be one of these commanding arts which directs how far the other arts are to be pursued. And since all Philosophers, even of the most opposite schemes, agree in words at least that 'Happiness either consists in virtue or virtuous offices, or it is to be obtained and secured by them:' The chief points to be enquired into in Morals must be, what course of life is according to the intention of nature? wherein consists happiness? and what is virtue"[433]

It is Hutcheson's advocacy of virtue that lies at the heart of his stoicism, and it is significant that his ideas about virtue, ethics and rights proceeded from this theory of the moral sense. While ethics governed action in society for Hutcheson, the moral sense governed individual action. The moral sense, by its nature, was designed for regulating human powers, and its 'dignity' was found in virtue. Virtue "... does not lye in the mere sentiment of approbation of certain affections and actions, but in acting agreeably to it, ...": consequently, "... the soul of man, ... bears a resemblance of Divine Intelligence in its rational faculties, but also of the Divine disinterested benignity in its social and public affections: and thus too our internal constitution ... ."[434] In Hutcheson's view, virtue was sought for its own sake, arising from the belief that the products of moral sense were ideas that stemmed from benevolent actions based on original perceptions. The ties between virtue, benevolence and perceptions were intended by God.[435]

Following the civic humanist model, Hutcheson placed the pursuit of virtue at the heart of private and public life, linking personal and social obligations within the

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[433] Ibid.
[434] Hutcheson, Francis, A System of Moral Philosophy (1755), Preface, p. xix.
[435] The moral sense, virtue, benevolence and perception all functioned under the jurisdiction of Divine benevolence, suggesting that at the heart of Hutcheson's system is a world governed

context of contemporary citizenship. Moral philosophical obligations became institutionalised through the political structures of society, which set a significant precedent for the Scots' subsequent treatment of the relationship between morality and civic duty. Following Cicero further, who took his lead from Polybius the Stoic, Hutcheson implied that civil society existed for the moral improvement of its members.

It is important to note, however, that Hutcheson's admiration for the Stoics was not unconditional. Throughout chapter IV, part vi, of A System of Moral Philosophy, Hutcheson referred to the combined wisdom of the Greek Stoic, Sextus Empiricus, the Roman orator, Cicero, and the Emperor, Marcus Aurelius.[436] He admired Cicero's assertion that man has a natural tendency to gain knowledge, and that the "... chief beauties of countenance arise from morally estimable abilities."[437] In chapter VII, Hutcheson objected to the Stoic imposition of limitations on human understanding. Unlike the Stoics, he distinguished between virtue and decency. There was a place in Hutcheson's thought for meritorious activity that did not necessarily promote virtue. Virtue was synonymous with true valour, while decency drew upon lesser qualities: patience, practical wisdom and sound business sense.[438] According to Hutcheson, virtuous action was ultimately the product of good will, which pitted him against Marcus Aurelius, who acknowledged the value of action motivated

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through charity rather than strict utility. This provides one example of Hutcheson's stoicism being limited by his ultimate commitment to Christian principles.

[436] While Hutcheson refers to Cicero as a Stoic in this instance, there is always a problem in so doing.

[437] Hutcheson, Francis, A System of Moral Philosophy (1755) Preface, p. 87.

[438] Ibid., p. 64.

by self-interest. Hutcheson was also critical of the Stoic view that the relationship between God and man was disjointed.

One begins to see that the traditional civic humanist characterisation of Hutcheson's stoicism remains valid in terms of defining the fabric of civil society. The deep connection Hutcheson made between morality and public action reflected the Ciceronian imperative that citizenship involved contributing to the greater good of the community over time. Ultimately, however, a productive life in Hutcheson's world was one characterised by learning, judgement, correct moral action and faith, all of which served to illustrate the best aspects of human identity. As Hutcheson developed his moral theories, and by extension his treatment of natural theology and religion, his civic humanism gave way to a Neostoic emphasis upon transcendent universal truths that lent itself to the moral spirit he wished to engender. Furthermore, while Hutcheson challenged his fellow citizens to exercise their faculties of reason and sense for the benefit of civil society he added to the equation by suggesting that the primary force driving action and improvement was benevolence.

For Hutcheson benevolence was "... a distinct perception of beauty or excellence in the kind affections of rational agents; whence we are determined to admire and love such characters and persons."[439] Benevolence prompted one to act solely for the betterment of society without regard for personal gain. The benevolent impulse stemmed from the deepest recesses of moral sense, and constituted the

alternative form of human motivation to self-love or self-interest. Hutcheson was fully aware of the seductive power of self-interest, but he went to great lengths to prove that it fostered an inferior type of social action devoid of any virtuous elements:

"As to the love of benevolence, the very name excludes self-interest. We never call that man benevolent, who is in fact useful to others, but at the same time only intends his own interest, without any ultimate desire for the good of others. If there be any real good-will or kindness at all, it must be disinterested; for the most useful action imaginable loses all appearance of benevolence, as soon as we discern that it only flowed from self-love, or interest."

Furthermore,

"To raise benevolence, no more is required than calmly to consider any sensitive nature not pernicious to others. Gratitude arises from benefits conferred from good-will on ourselves, or those we love; complacence is a perception of the moral sense. Gratitude includes some complacence, and complacence still raises a stronger good-will than that we have towards indifferent characters, where this is no opposition of interests."[440]

Hutcheson also appreciated that the benevolent impulse could be corrupted by self-interest, just as he acknowledged that deficiencies arose within the operations of the moral sense. Human morality was fallible despite the natural strength of benevolence. Therefore Hutcheson distinguished between the motives and operations of the moral sense and moral distinctions arising from it, and a separate natural sense of good and evil that regulated conduct other than that

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[439] Hutcheson, Francis, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, printed from 4th edition of 1738, Glasgow, 1772, Treatise I, Introduction, section I, part 1 as quoted in Brodie, Alexander (ed.) The Scottish Enlightenment An Anthology, p. 122.

undertaken for the public good. Action prompted by the moral sense from a benevolent impulse retained its superior place in Hutcheson's scheme as it directly referred to the motivations of 'right reason':

"And yet, as soon as any action is represented to us as flowing from love, humanity, gratitude, compassion, a study of the good in others, and an ultimate desire of their happiness, although it were in the most distant part of the world, or in some past age, we feel joy within us, admire the lovely action, and praise its author. And on the contrary, every action represented as flowing from ill will, desire of the misery of others without view to any prevalent good to the public, …, raises abhorrence and aversion."[441]

The combined efforts of the moral sense and the natural sense of good and evil served useful purposes in that both contributed to the maintenance of order and the cultivation of virtue. Although individual judgement might be clouded by self-interest, one's 'sentiment' or 'perception' of virtue's inherent 'beauty' could not be 'counterbalanced' by self-interest.[442] Even giving virtue its due, this approach was not sufficient for Hume and Smith, who questioned whether individuals were truly capable of maintaining such a pure and objective benevolence. They were also sceptical about the degree to which Hutcheson's benevolence provided a comprehensive reply to the epistemological problem concerning how much one could genuinely know about another person's motives for action.[443]

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[440] Hutcheson, Francis, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, printed from 4th edition of 1738, Glasgow 1772, Treatise I, Introduction, section II, part 3 as quoted in ibid., pp. 131-32.
[441] Hutcheson, Francis, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, printed from 4th edition of 1738, Glasgow, 1772, Treatise I, Introduction, section I, part 2. As quoted in ibid., p. 123.
[442] These are Hutcheson's phrases.
[443] I am indebted here to Knud Haakonssen's discussion of Hutcheson's moral philosophy in Haakonssen, Knud, Natural Law and Moral Philosophy, especially chapter 2.

The blending of civic humanism with Neostoic themes also suggests that there was a moment of transition in Hutcheson's thought towards a broader interpretation for the role of virtue in society. Miller argues persuasively that by the time Hutcheson was preparing a draft of the System of Moral Philosophy, the philosopher's writing extended beyond the propagation of active citizenship to emphasise the attainment of happiness as the true purpose of life.[444] This shift of emphasis seems to illustrate Hutcheson's acknowledgement of the complementary nature of the relationship between the natural law school and civic humanism. He referred to this synthesis when describing the full character of his moral philosophy:

> "The Intention of Moral Philosophy is to direct men to that course of action which tends most effectually to promote their greatest happiness and perfection; as far as it can be done by observations and conclusions discoverable from the constitution of nature, without any aids of supernatural revelation; these maxims or rules of conduct are therefore reputed as laws of nature, and the system or collection of them is called the LAW of NATURE."[445]

The intrinsic beauty of Hutcheson's law of nature lay in the fact that it reflected the Providentially-ordained order of the world that underscored and united all the elements of Hutcheson's moral and political systems. The final purpose of any inquiry into the nature of virtue or morality was to enhance one's appreciation of Divine order, the first intimations of which were received through natural

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[444] It is the intention to achieve happiness, rather than happiness as an end in itself, that concerns Hutcheson most. It is important to note that from the seventeenth century all systems of natural law had stoic or quasi-stoic dimensions, in the sense that all stoicism presupposed the existence of a system of natural law.

[445] Hutcheson quoted in Miller, Thomas P., 'Francis Hutcheson and the Civic Humanist Tradition' in Hook, Andrew and Sher, Richard B. (eds), The Glasgow Enlightenment, p. 47.

theology. Hutcheson's characterisation of virtue as a 'beauty of the soul' proceeded from these priorities, as did his belief that individual inquiry fostered greater degrees of self-control, which in turn contributed to the tranquility of society. The thrust and tone of Hutcheson's stoicism had moved closer to the realms of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, a conclusion recently supported by M.A. Stewart.

Steward points out that Hutcheson's mature philosophy shows an increasing reliance upon Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, which suggests that Hutcheson found their Stoicism "... sufficiently congenial to the moderate Calvinist mind that they could be used to satisfy the pedagogical requirement that secular writings must not jeopardize the faith."[446] Hutcheson's stoicism was built upon recognition of the obvious compatibility between Stoic and Christian themes. But Stewart also suggests that Hutcheson's review of religious persecution under Marcus Aurelius illustrated another dimension to the philosopher's stoicism: the encouragement of a 'passionate toleration' to which Hutcheson had been committed since his days as a member of Molesworth's circle in the 1720s.[447]

It is from Hutcheson's later stoicism, with its tolerant and universal overtones, that Blair, Robertson and Drysdale took their lead in developing their own understanding of Christian Stoicism. Changes in emphasis or nuance continued, but the Moderates never strayed far from the rule Hutcheson gave his students.

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[446] Stewart, M.A., 'The Stoic legacy in the early Scottish Enlightenment', in Osler, Margaret (ed.) Atoms, pneuma, and tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 291.

[447] And perhaps earlier, as toleration was fundamental to Whiggery.

"Let not philosophy rest in speculation, let it be a medicine for the disorders of the soul, freeing the heart from anxious solicitudes and turbulent desires; and dispelling its fears: let your manners, your tempers, and conduct be such as right reason requires. Look not upon this part of philosophy as matter for ostentation, or shew of knowledge, but as the most sacred law of life and conduct, which none can despise with impunity, or without impiety toward God."[448]

iv

Pressing the Boundaries: Smith's Stoicism and His Distinctive Form of Benevolence

If Francis Hutcheson's stoicism may be interpreted as a progress from a traditional form of civic humanism to an increasingly fluid form of Neostoicism, the task of categorising the stoicism of his student, Adam Smith, is more complex. Intellectual historians present Smith, like Hutcheson, as a practical moralist and social theorist,[449] dedicated to the encouragement of virtue and the promotion of duty in society. Smith shared Hutcheson's deep concern about propriety in moral behaviour, and as we have seen, followed Hutcheson's example by rooting his ethics in a study of moral philosophy that focussed on the operations of man's moral faculty.

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[448] Hutcheson, Francis, *Philosophiae moralis institutio compendiaria,* 2nd ed. (Glasgow: Foulis, 1745), p. v; from the anonymous and posthumous English translation, A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (Glasgow: Foulis, 1747) as quoted in Stewart, M.A., 'The Stoic legacy in the early Scottish Enlightenment', in Osler, Margaret (ed.), Atoms, pneuma, and tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought, pp. 290-91.

[449] See among many others Phillipson, Nicholas, 'Adam Smith as a civic moralist' in Hont, Istvan and Ignatieff, Michael (eds), Wealth and Virtue, The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, pp. 179-202; Lindgren, J. Ralph, The Social Philosophy of Adam Smith (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973); Robertson, John, The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue, (Edinburgh, 1985) and Robertson's 'Scottish Political Economy Beyond the Civic Tradition: Government and Economic Development in *The Wealth of Nations', History of Political Thought,* IV, 3, pp. 451-82.

This faculty, however, was distinct from Hutcheson's moral sense. It was not an innate entity but an independently operating faculty of the mind that judged all lesser human faculties and social action. The source of this moral faculty was a type of reason modified by one's natural moral instinct and the principle of life gained through experience. All matters or taste and beauty, which were defined by one's sentiments or feelings, were determined by the degree to which they were agreeable to the moral faculty. The unity of all the various elements of morality co-operated under Divine power to fulfil the dictates of Providence.[450]

Smith's admiration for the Stoics' sober and 'manly' virtue is now firmly established within the Enlightenment canon. His early encounters with The Discourses of Epictetus set in motion a life-long exploration of stoicism that provided a foundation for his moral philosophy and ethical theory. Smith's first formal acknowledgements to Stoic philosophers appeared in the earliest editions of *TMS*, where he made particular references to Epictetus, Cicero and Marcus Aurelius. The fact that at the end of his life, Smith reworked central passages of *TMS* to emphasise more forcefully the Stoic influences he valued, particularly those concerning duty, self-command and the character of virtue, testifies to the strength of his commitment to the ancient philosophers.

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[450] See Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 165-66. Smith wrote: "Since these, therefore, were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the rules which they prescribe are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity, promulgated by those viceregents ... which he has thus set up within us. All general rules are commonly denominated laws: this the general rules which bodies observe in the communication of motion, are called the laws of motion. ... Moral laws may much more justly be considered so."

It is suggested here that the challenge of categorising Smith's stoicism lies in its multifaceted nature. While it is helpful to think of Smith's ethics as a combination of stoicism and Hutcheson, as D.D. Raphael suggested, the aesthetic elements of Smith's thought reflect additional influences, not least those of La Bruyère and the Neostoic French moralists cited in the Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.[451] Smith's investigations of political economy and justice draw significantly from the civic humanism of Cicero. Although Hume was more critical of the Stoics than Smith, Hume highlighted the unity of the Stoics' rooting an expansion of traditional secular morality in social virtues.

In terms of understanding the influence of Smith's stoicism on the Moderates, it is also necessary to recall that Smith's broader discussion of stoicism, natural religion and the impartial spectator assisted Blair, Robertson and Drysdale in developing more precise criteria by which to interpret forms of religion. We know that throughout the *TMS* Smith carefully distinguished between the disruptive effects organised religion could have on a culture, and the wider benefits received through natural religion.

The parallels between Smith's stoicism and natural theology cause many scholars to conclude that Smith replaced interest in revealed religion with stoicism by the time he was preparing the sixth edition of *TMS*. Whether or not Smith privately abandoned all vestiges of his Calvinist heritage will remain an open question given the loss of his Glasgow lecture notes on natural theology and the

[451] See Smith, Adam, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1985), pp. 80-82. See also the earlier discussion of La Bruyère in chapter 3.

destruction (on Smith's orders) of many of his personal papers. If Smith developed an appreciation of Stoic cosmology that hinted at spiritual rather than intellectual needs, it does not seem to follow necessarily that Smith ended his days as a deist, as one body of historiographical consensus suggests.

Ultimately in *TMS* Smith was concerned with developing a moral philosophy that underscored a qualified endorsement of the competitive individualism inherent in commercial society. By replacing Hutcheson's moral sense with his own original theory of sympathy and a more limited form of benevolence, Smith reshaped the manner in which ethics had to be considered by all of the Scottish literati.

Smith followed Hutcheson in exploring moral principles within the context of social realities. He shared Hutcheson's view that the moral worth of action was dependent upon the motives and intentions of the agent. But in his preference for a moral instinct based on a sense of propriety and duty, rather than a moral instinct specifically contingent upon the guidance of the Christian Church, Smith placed the Scots in a unique position to reply to sceptics who questioned religion's role in the moral order.[452] They key point for our purposes is that Stoicism provided a very useful common ground through which disparate philosophical emphases could be accommodated.

[452] As we have seen Smith gives religion a very specific place in the moral order as an extension of morality in society. He goes out of his way to say that fear of divine retribution provides a profound motive for virtuous behaviour. It is evident to him from the observance of common life that many believe and act on this motive, and believe in its consequences. What this suggests about Christianity is, however, another matter.

We know that Blair incorporated Smithian language into his sermons, and will see shortly that Drysdale followed Blair's example. It is also understood that Robertson shared Smith's interest in the roles virtue and natural religion played in primitive societies. They led Moderate approval of Smith's theory of sympathy to counter the selfish impulse in society, and by extension seem to have relied on the coherence of Smith's moral philosophy to enhance the philosophical form of Christian Stoicism. To determine the credibility of this suggestion, it is necessary to return to the stoic principles which Smith and the Moderates universally recommended, virtue, duty and self-command. Parallel attention will be paid to the kind of stoicism Smith endorsed as he developed his theories.

v

Virtue, Duty and Self-Command

In his revised sixth edition of *TMS*, Smith presented a new section, "Of the Character of Virtue, Consisting of Three Sections," in which virtue took on a tripartite form to include benevolence and justice; prudence; and self-command. These existed in earlier editions of TMS but Smith developed further his explanation of their interrelated nature. 'Virtuous man' was recast in a stoic light as 'prudent man', whose concerns centred around those "... objects upon which his comfort and happiness in this life are supposed to principally to depend, ...": health, fortune, rank and reputation.[453]

[453] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 213.

The prudent person was well-educated, frugal, sincere and modest, fully aware of the value of cultivated manners and speech. He was somewhat detached from the world in that he did not appear 'in society' frequently, and was 'reserved' in his opinions and comments about those in his immediate circle. Insofar as his duty permitted, the prudent person attended to his own affairs without interfering in those of his neighbours. The prudent person was 'not always distinguished by the most exquisite sensibility', but was honest and cautious. He avoided causing offence unless the truth or an extreme situation demanded it, and made an excellent and reliable friend. His steadiness recommended him to society, and he was "... always both supported and rewarded by the entire approbation of the impartial spectator."[454] Prudence in this form "... commands a certain cold esteem, but seems not entitled to any very ardent love or admiration."[455]

When prudence is exercised for purposes beyond the realm of caring for individual needs, it derives a nobler character that Smith evaluates warmly. Here he talks:

> "... of the prudence of the great general, ..., of the great legislator. Prudence is, in all these cases, combined with many greater and more splendid virtues, with valour, with extensive and strong benevolence, with a sacred regard to the rules of justice, and all these supported by a proper degree of self-command. This superior prudence, when carried to the highest degree of perfection, necessarily supposes the art, ..., and the habit or disposition of acting with the most perfect propriety in every possible circumstance and situation. It necessarily supposes the utmost perfection of all the intellectual and of all the moral virtues. ... It is the most perfect wisdom combined with the most perfect virtue. It constitutes very

[454] Ibid., p. 215.
[455] Ibid., p. 216.

nearly the character of the Academical or Peripatetic[456] sage, as the inferior prudence does that of the Epicurean."[457]

The want of either form of prudence in society must be the 'object of compassion' unless it is combined with vice for malevolent purposes. Only 'knaves' or fools acted from such premises, and their imprudence formed the 'vilest' character.

The Stoics themselves recommended that every individual is charged first with his or her own care, and then with that of those around them. Smith's 'prudent man' attempts to fulfil both objectives to the best of his ability, however that higher form of prudence, i.e., service to the larger community, remains available to a limited few. The degree to which people 'distribute their good offices' in society was directly proportional to their individual strength of character and 'very limited powers of beneficence'. This is analogous to Hutcheson's and the Moderates' acceptance of the fact that while every human being was capable of virtue, only a select few achieved its highest manifestations.[458]

The virtue of beneficence in these passages refers not to a form of charitable benevolence, but to the physical means one may have at one's disposal to assist another member of society. Beneficence is also distinguished from the self-interested form of benevolence Smith defined to refute Hutcheson's independently operating form of benevolence in society. Smith's benevolence

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[456] [Smith's note: Platonic or Aristotelian].
[457] Ibid., p. 216.
[458] In other words, there is a direct corollary between Hutcheson's virtue and what Smith calls superior prudence.

and motives for beneficence both derived from sociability, which underscored all social interaction. While prudence was the primary means by which one addressed one's own concerns, the virtues of beneficence and justice assisted one in contributing to the good of civil society.

On a higher plain of human endeavour, it is the virtue of propriety that Smith recommended to his audience. Propriety, in turn, operating through the 'sentiments' or dictates of the impartial spectator, recommended self-command above other virtues to restrain those passions that cloud judgement and disturb tranquility. The master of self-command enjoys real 'constancy and firmness' at all times, 'whether in solitude or society', and acts with constant reference to the 'man within the breast'.[459] Smith explains the pre-eminence of self-command:

"To act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and proper beneficence, seems to have no great merit where there is no temptation to do otherwise. But to act with cool deliberation in the midst of the greatest dangers and difficulties; to observe religiously the sacred rules of justice in spite both of the greatest interests which might tempt, …; never to suffer the benevolence of our temper to be damped or discouraged by the malignity and ingratitude of the individuals towards whom it may have been exercised, is the character of the most exalted wisdom and virtue. Self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues seem to derive their principal lustre."[460]

It is the person enjoying the greatest degree of self command who meets fully his or her social obligations and moral duties.

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[459] See Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 146 for a complete description of the character of one who has mastered self-command.
[460] Ibid., p. 241.

Humanity's natural regard for the general rules of morality forms one's sense of duty, which is directly linked through the impartial spectator to one's conscience. Duty is a "... principle of the greatest consequence in human life."[461] Its fulfillment provides 'the bulk of mankind' with a focus for action. Smith argued that a reverence for duty extends across all social ranks, regardless of sophistication in education and training. This reverence was first impressed upon the mind by nature, as demonstrated by the ascribing of virtuous characteristics to superior beings in pagan superstition. The rules of duty and conduct ensure that one acts in accordance with moral laws, and this in turn corrects 'misrepresentations of self-love' or excessive self-interest.

The intriguing aspect of Smith's moral scheme as it emerges from these observations is the deep coherence among its constituent elements. The lesser virtues of prudence, justice and beneficence underscore a regularity of conduct that promotes the public virtue the Moderates so admired. Smith wrote:

"The virtues of prudence, justice, and beneficence, have no tendency to produce any but the most agreeable effects. Regard to those effects, as it originally recommends them to the actor, so does it afterwards to the impartial spectator. In our approbation of the character of the prudent man, we feel, ... the security which he must enjoy while he walks under the safeguard of that sedate and deliberate virtue. In our approbation of the character of the just man, we feel, ... the security which all those connected with him, whether in neighborhood, society, or business, must derive from his scrupulous anxiety never either to hurt or offend. In our approbation of the character of the beneficent man, we enter into the gratitude of those who are within the sphere of his good offices, and conceive with them the highest sense of his merit. ..."

In these,

[461] Ibid., p. 162.

"... and in all the other virtues of self-command, the splendid and dazzling quality seems always to be the greatness, and steadiness of the exertion, and the strong sense of propriety which is necessary ... to make that exertion."[462]

The higher virtue self-command focusses attention on the fulfillment of moral duties, which transcend the minutiae of daily life. It is a 'sacred regard' to a combination of all of these rules of propriety and self-command that determines the dependability and integrity of any individual. Smith's 'prudent man' is very much a person of the world, who happily engages in social transactions with a general regard for the principles of propriety, morality and duty. But it is the person who embodies the deeper spirit of self-command who provides the ideal stoic model to which Smith's readers should aspire.

vi

Stoicism and Resentment

We know that the central task for the ancient Stoics was to overcome any passion that distracted one from the proper focus of life: that is, the achievement of virtue. As John Dwyer has recently reminded readers, Smith and the Enlightenment literati adopted this stoic directive into their moral thought by re-investigating the precise role the passions played within the individual mind and within the context of 'group harmony'. The ultimate restraint on the passions

[462] Ibid., p. 264.

came from sociability and sympathy, which together encompassed the positive moral and ethical norms of civil society.[463]

Smith went to considerable lengths to describe how the passions affected every dimension of human thought and behavior. His analysis of sympathy, which underscored the power of the impartial spectator, was made through a description of all the 'social' or 'unsocial' passions that influenced whether or not one approved of the actions of one's neighbour. A certain 'property of passions' was essential to maintain constancy in thought and deed.

The relationship between 'social' and 'unsocial' passions was complex. The 'social' passions, generosity, humanity, kindness, compassion, served to motivate those 'benevolent' affections that fostered respect and approbation within the human breast. Mutual regard for these passions facilitated all social interaction and established a positive sense of community among individuals. The 'unsocial' passions, mean-spiritedness, insensitivity, envy, were an undesirable but '... necessary part of the character of human nature"[464] The selfish passions, if taken to extremes, could trigger a disintegration of the benefits gained through the 'social' passions. They could also disrupt one's sense and civic responsibility to an alarming degree.

Chief among the 'unsocial' passions was resentment, the opposite of gratitude, the primary 'social' passion. While the immediate effects of resentment tended

[463] Dwyer, John, The Age of the Passions, see introduction, pp. 1-13.
[464] Smith, Adam, the Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 34.

to manifest themselves in ill feeling between people, resentment could, on occasion, be useful. For example, if the immediate effect of an action triggered resentment on the part of the receiver of the action, it followed that a by-stander would share that resentment because he disapproved of the action taken against a fellow human being. If, however, the motive for the malevolent action triggered no feeling of disapprobation on the part of the by-stander, it became difficult to feel a sympathetic resentment with the victim. Out of a feeling of magnanimity, the by-stander might 'rise above' a base feeling of resentment, in which case the perpetrator did the by-stander a service by contributing to the process of overcoming passions.

This example belies the larger role Smith ascribed to resentment as a 'functioning passion' in society. It is, for example, resentment operating in conjunction with the need for justice that prompted society to punish criminals. It is a weakness of the human condition that resentment fuels as many kinds of action as gratitude does. However the key to understanding any positive consequence of resentment rested in Smith's encouragement to control natural impulses to retaliate against transgression. If resentment served to encourage restraint of emotions on an individual or wider social level, it had a useful part to play in man's emotional life. Smith again turned to the Stoics to give this concept added authority:

"The ancient stoics were of opinion, that as the world was governed by the all-ruling providence of a wise, powerful, and good God, every single event ought to be regarded, as making a necessary part of the plan of the universe, and as tending to promote the general order and happiness of the whole: that the vices and follies of mankind, therefore, made as necessary a part of this plan as their wisdom or their virtue; and by that eternal art which educes good from ill, were made to tend equally to the prosperity and perfection of the great system of

nature. No speculation of this kind, however, … could diminish our natural abhorrence for vice, whose immediate effects are so destructive, and whose remote ones are too distant to be traced by … imagination."[465]

Smith's acknowledgement of the power of resentment would have caused the Moderates obvious difficulties. As practising Christians, they could not condone any action that stemmed from resentment, yet they accepted that some action resulted from negative motives as a consequence of humanity's fall from grace. This was the paradox that successive generations of Christians had faced since Augustine's day. While on an intellectual level the Moderates may have understood the logic of Smith's arguments, they could not actively endorse resentment or self-interest as contributory to the cultivation of virtue. A philosophical impasse was reached to which there was no clear solution, other than to resort to the tried and tested method of minimising sources of philosophical tension for the sake of promoting those moral principles upon which all agreed.

The implications of this impasse may be interpreted in different ways. For example, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Smith's increasing reliance upon the Stoics demonstrates a gradual abandonment of revealed religion on his part. It is possible that the Moderates' inability to bridge the gap over self-interest and resentment highlights a fundamental philosophical flaw in their intellectual framework. Alternatively this gap might be a natural product of the permanent tension between faith and reason.

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[465] Ibid., p. 36.

For our purposes, it is the stoicism that Smith invokes in the quotation above that is interesting. As he investigated the rules of nature in *TMS* that determined the course of human existence, Smith seemed to hint at an understanding of a stoicism that was derived neither from benevolence nor resentment. The aim of this stoicism is not reconciliation of disparate elements, so much as accommodation of them, and man's inevitable limitations, within an ordered unity.[466] Regardless of the direction in which his moral philosophy developed, Smith still seemed to require a transcendent unifying principle for it in order to safeguard its authority. If Smith was hinting at his own unique form of Scottish Neostoicism here, he was doing so in his characteristically originally way.

vii

The Stoicism of the Revised Sections of *TMS*

In part VII of *TMS*, Smith returns to his consideration of the nature of virtue. Virtue is recommended to individuals by an appropriately guarded type of self-love and by reason modified by sympathy. Smith recalls that every system of morality was founded on some element of natural principle: benevolence for Hutcheson; within the context of external relationships for Samuel Clarke; and, for others in the pursuit of happiness. These various perceptions of virtue gratify the moral senses. A virtuous temperament did not depend on one's 'species of affection', "... but in the proper government and direction of all our affections,

[466] Furthermore, if Smith's stoicism provided a framework from within which problems of resentment and benevolence could be mastered, it would have had profoundly important consequences for civilisation.

which may be either virtuous or vicious according to the objects which they pursue, and the degree of vehemence with which they pursue them."[467]

Smith's comment was designed to show how different conceptions of virtue could be weakened by inadequate theories of sociability, and he went about this by recasting the tripartite nature of virtue to include propriety, prudence and disinterested benevolence. These are then reviewed through the 'eyes' of Aristotle and Zeno. Aristotle's vision of virtue is invoked to illustrate connections between propriety and virtue, stressing Aristotle's preference for 'habits of moderation' over moderate affections.[468] Smith suggests Aristotle implied that virtue resulted from the quality of action and human character. Action was born through a moderated reason's effect on affection; character depended on the evolution of a habit of reasonable moderation. Zeno's concept of virtue lay in another area: choosing wisely in action and thought to preserve the self-love bestowed by nature to each individual. Here virtue is achieved through consistent obedience to nature's authority.[469] The virtuous man selected health over strength; strength over agility; reputation over power; and, power over riches. This natural scale embodied "... that perfect rectitude of conduct which constituted the essence of virtue."[470]

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[467] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 266.
[468] Ibid., p. 270: Aristotle's vision of virtue consisted "in the habit of mediocrity according to right reason. Every particular virtue, ..., lies in a kind of middle between two opposite vices, of which the one offends from being too much, the other from being too little affected by a particular species of objects."
[469] Ibid., p. 272: Zeno suggested "... every animal was by nature recommended to his own care, and was endowed with the principle of self-love, that it might endeavour to preserve, not only its existence, but all the different parts of its nature, ..." Similarly the body and mind of man

Smith agrees that humanity's interest is best served within the context of 'the whole', or society. Our final interests are determined in relation to 'the whole', and the greatest degrees of prosperity are achieved as agents in society, or as part of 'the whole'. But through detachment from society, we comprehend the decisive factors of our behaviour and nature, as if making a sacrifice for charity's sake by withdrawing from external influences.

Smith brings Epictetus into his discussion, as a philosopher whose interpretation of the nature of virtue and happiness depended on contemplation encouraged through freedom from externalities.[471] For Epictetus, Stoic happiness arose from the acceptance of one's lot in life, and from fulfilling the duties and the affections that fuel respect for authority.[472] Divisions among philosophical schools aside, Smith claimed both of his thinkers recommended a tolerant strong virtue as most conducive to tranquility and the 'infallible road to happiness'.

Smith reminds readers of his admiration for the subsuming rectitude and 'manhood' of Stoic doctrines, and the degree of license it offers for self-creation. He follows this with a curiously favourable discussion of suicide related to self-creation. A certain contempt for life and death evolved in Epictetan Stoicism based on an ultimate trust in the divine order of nature. This was not a negative

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interact, with nature pointing out whatever was needed to sustain the existence as fit to be chosen. The only poverty man suffered was "want of authority."

[470] Ibid., p. 273.

[471] [Reminding readers of both philosophers' notions of man as spectator.]

[472] Ibid., p. 276 for reference on Epictetus: "A wise man never complains of the destiny of Providence, nor thinks the universe in confusion when he is out of order. He does not look upon himself as a whole, separated and detached from every other part of nature, ... He regards himself in the light in which he imagines the great genius of human nature, and of the world, regards him. He enters ... into the sentiments of that divine Being, and considers himself as an atom, a particle,

contempt, so much as a perfect detachment and obedience to the Providential order.[473] The model Stoic man wished to view the world (and himself) through the eyes of the Creator, but was prevented from so doing by his desire to comprehend the movements of Providence. Therefore attention had to focus on the perennial quest for truth: the process of contemplation and improvement was all.

It was neither desirable nor ultimately possible in Smith's view to acquire that perfect detachment, or Stoic apathy, that Epictetus suggested was the end result of the process of contemplation.[474] Apathy consisted of an absence of passion or feeling, which the Scots thought unproductive. From Smith's perspective, then, the point was to permit an 'imperfect' virtuousness acting sympathetically in agreement with our impartial spectator. This hinted at a moderated kind of stoicism reflecting the more benign influence of Marcus Aurelius, who delighted "... in expressing his contentment with the ordinary course of things, and in pointing out beauties even in those parts of it where vulgar observers are not apt to see any."[475]

In a sense, sympathy seems to become as essential a component in Smith's later interpretation of Stoicism as it was to his moral system. It was through unselfish

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of an ... infinite system, which must and ought to be disposed of, according to the conveniency of the whole."

[473] Ibid., p. 288: Of suicide: "This contempt of life and death, however, and, at the same time, the most entire submission to the order of Providence; the most complete contentment with every event which the current of human affairs could possibly cast up, may be considered as the two fundamental doctrines upon which rested the whole fabric of Stoical morality. The independent and spirited, but often harsh Epictetus, may be considered as the great apostle of the first of those doctrines: the mild, the humane, the benevolent Antoninus, of the second."

[474] For Cicero, apathy was analogous to tranquility.

sympathy that corresponding sentiments fostered virtuous understanding and action. Sympathy enabled the impartial spectator to act as arbiter of action, dependent itself upon imagination and reason for the discovery of the general rules of justice that embody moral conduct. In this regard Smith acknowledged that Hutcheson was correct to distinguish between reason and feelings as sources of moral guidance, as was Cicero's emphasis of the value of manners that "... inflame our natural love of virtue, ..."[476] In the end, we treat rules of morality (and here consists ethics) as, "... a science which, though, like criticism, it does not admit of the most accurate precision, is, however, both highly useful and agreeable. It is of all others the most susceptible of the embellishment of eloquence ... bestowing .. a new importance upon the smallest rules of duty."[477]

The final key element of Smith's thought that permeates his stoicism and his morality is an over-riding emphasis on the power of Providence to underscore the harmony of the Scots' world view. Smith's preference for the uncorrupted truths of natural theology suggest that by the time he was revising the last edition of *TMS*, his understanding of Providence referred to stoicism and natural religion rather than to an organised form of Christianity. We know that this preference was based on Smith's resentment of organised religion's abuse of authority.

If Smith's hesitation to accept the extremes of Epictetan stoicism demonstrated a wish to recommend moderation and tolerance as central elements of his moral legacy, one wonders if an analogy may be drawn from this for Smith's final view

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[475] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 288.
[476] Ibid., p. 329.

of the role of religion and life? While Smith never strayed from his condemnation of superstition, the fact remains that he left a place for the Deity, the Author of Nature, in his thought.[478]

Despite the sophistication of Smith's understanding of natural religion and stoicism, it is not entirely clear that his fundamental concept of the Deity departed completely from the Calvinist tradition of his youth and early adulthood.[479] There is a rigourism in Smith's references to Providence and self-command that mirrors Calvinist discipline. While readers must remain sensitive to Smith's rejection of those 'whining' enthusiastic forms of Christianity that grated upon his sensibilities, the Moderates must have wondered what deeper motivations prevented Smith from joining Hume as an avowed sceptic.[480]

It is suggested here that Smith was concerned with religious truth to the extent that true faith promoted virtue and duty. Religion, like economics, was an area of human endeavour that was part of a complex series of motives for action in human life. If Smith was not concerned with religious truth, but purely with religion's social function, the Moderates' misinterpreted Smith's image of the Creator. If so, any reflection about the theological nature of Smith's Supreme Being becomes academic, and Smith's stoicism served only to socialise religion

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[477] Ibid.

[478] It is interesting to note that while Smith advocated a type of toleration in *TMS*, he was deeply critical of non-Protestant sects in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. (See for example, Smith, Adam, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, pp. 298-99; 435-37.)

[479] See the earlier discussion of Calvinist overtones in Smith's description of the Deity in *TMS* II.ii.3.12.

[480] See Smith's comment on Stoic doctrines in *TMS*, p. 283: "The spirit and manhood of their doctrines make a wonderful contrast with the desponding, plaintive, and whining tone of some modern systems." Cf. 'whining and melancholy moralists', *TMS* III.3.9. See also Smith's letter

by altering people's perceptions of just how religion contributes to culture. This seems to belie both the intricacy and subtlety of Smith's moral thought. and an ultimate connection he made between virtuous man and God.

"The wise and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest of his own particular order or society. ... He should, therefore, be equally willing that all those inferior interests should be sacrificed to the greater interest of the universe, to the interest of that great society of all sensible and intelligent beings, of which God himself is the immediate administrator and director. If he is deeply impressed with the habitual and thorough conviction that this benevolent and all-wise Being can admit into the system of his government, no partial evil which is not necessary for the universal good, he must consider all ... misfortunes ..., as necessary for the prosperity of the universe, and therefore ..., not only to submit to with resignation, but as what he himself, if he had known all the connexions and dependencies of things, ought sincerely and devoutly to have wished for. Nor does this magnanimous resignation to the will of the great Director of the universe, seem in any respect beyond the reach of human nature."[481]

The 'connexions' referred to in the passage above remind readers of the extent to which Smith searched for moral certainty by investigating ties between truth, ideas and wonder, all of which were treated in his essays, 'The History of Astronomy' and 'The History of the Ancient Physics'. In these essays Smith discussed the 'principles of connection' between 'successions of ideas' that formed knowledge. As knowledge increased in civilised societies, so a greater need for division and classification of species and social categories developed.[482] The great problem, which Smith and the Moderates shared with the Stoics, was to overcome an ultimate 'lack of uniformity' in nature by redefining an order

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to Alexander Wedderburn contrasting David Hume's courage during his last illness with the weak resignation of a 'Whining Christian', 14 August 1776, in Smith, Adam, Correspondence, p. 203.

[481] Smith, Adam, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 235-36.

[482] This has clear parallels with Smith's positive endorsement of a division of ranks in society.

through which all dimensions of human experience were linked by an invisible chain. Smith described the Stoic's impression of this connecting force:

"That some chain subsists betwixt all her [Nature's] seemingly disjointed phaenomena, they [the Stoics] are necessarily led to conceive; and that magnanimity, and cheerfulness, which all generous natures acquire who are bred in civilised societies, where they have so few occasions to feel their weakness, and so many to be conscious of their strength and security, renders them less disposed to employ, for this connecting chain, those invisible beings whom the fear and ignorance of their rude forefathers had engendered."[483]

[483] Smith, Adam, 'The History of Astronomy' in Smith, Adam, Essays on Philosophical Subjects, (eds) Wightman, W.P.D. and Bryce, J.C. [Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1982], p. 50. See editor's note 7 on same page: "[For Smith's views on the relation between scientific and religious explanation, cf. *WN* V.i.f.24: 'Superstition first attempted to satisfy this curiousity by referring all those wonderful appearances to the immediate agency of the gods. Philosophy afterwards endeavoured to account for them, from more familiar causes …' But also Ancient Physics, 9 below: 'as ignorance begot superstition, science gave birth to the first theism that arose among those nations, who were not enlightened by divine Revelation.']" {The precise reference for the Ancient Physics quote appears on p. 114 of Wightman/Bryce edition.}

Chapter 7

Smith's Influence on John Drysdale, or Virtue Through Faith and Self-Command

While Moderate ministers were united in their commitment to Christian stoic principles as the foundation of social ethics, they contributed to the propagation of virtue in various ways. It has been shown that William Robertson and Hugh Blair enjoy a unique place among Moderate ranks as great thinkers, whose innovative investigations of faith and morality provided a bedrock of polite religious and social thought. By contrast John Drysdale represents another kind of Moderate minister, one who was not so much a great thinker as a formidable ecclesiastical figure. His career revolved around the consistent exercise of virtue through fulfilling his pastoral duty rather than scholarly speculation. He was deeply interested in the workings or morality in society, following the example of his lifelong friend, Adam Smith.[484] Yet it was through service to his parishes and to the General Assembly that his Christian Stoicism manifested itself.

The intricacies of Moderate ecclesiastical politics were of somewhat lesser interest in the discussions of Blair and Robertson given the degrees to which they combined their careers in the Church with academic interests. Both men,

however, were passionately committed to fostering Moderate influence within the General Assembly. From 1751-2[485] when he emerged as the Moderates' spokesman there, Robertson's voice was dominant in Church debate. His authority was consolidated and strengthened upon his appointment as Principal of Edinburgh University, giving his critics among the Evangelical wing of the Church all the more reason to watch for hints of favouritism. By the time Robertson withdrew from public life, he had proved himself to be as consummate a tactician in Church affairs as he was in matters concerning the university or politics.

The Evangelical ministers' concerns about the lengths to which senior Moderates went to secure positions for their colleagues were reasonable. By the summer of 1764, Moderate candidates were successfully placed in the more prominent pulpits of Edinburgh and in substantial university positions. 'Dr. Robertson's administration', as Dugald Stewart called it, was firmly established.[486] Robertson's personal ambition was recognised by his friends, most notably Alexander Carlyle,[487] but his authority rested on their widespread support. Tensions arose among Moderates' ranks but their common commitment to identifying the full nature of 'polite Prebyterianism' superseded occasional ill-

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[484] Smith and Drysdale formed a close friendship during their school days in Kirkcaldy, where they were taught together by David Miller. Their lasting friendship will be discussed further in the next section.

[485] This time frame is taken form 1751, when Robertson first entered the Assembly, to 1752, when Robertson (et al.) published 'Reasons for Dissent', their first major declaration of Moderate priorities.

[486] See Stewart, Dugald, Account of the Life and Writings of William Robertson, D.D., Late Principal of the University of Edinburgh and Historiographer to His Majesty for Scotland, Read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 1796, in The Adam Smith Library, Biographical Memoir of Adam Smith, pp. 99-202.

feeling.[488] The Moderates' professional ties were sometimes complemented by private bonds through marriage, etc. This was the case with John Drysdale, who married the third daughter of William Adam,[489] the architect, who was one of Robertson's cousins.

Despite the fact that Drysdale is best remembered as a Church administrator, he demonstrated a keen interest in tracing links between matters of faith, doctrine and morality throughout his professional life. Two surviving volumes of published sermons form the core of his intellectual and spiritual legacy, and it is through an examination of these that this section will explore Drysdale's understanding of Christian Stoicism and his intellectual debts to Adam Smith.

The section will open with a review of Drysdale's early education, his entry into the ministry and his career in the Church. It will the consider Drysdale's profound belief in the roles Providence and public virtue play in society, arguing that both elements contextualize his advocacy of Christian Stoicism. Following Blair's model, Drysdale used sermons as social tools to encourage the many advantages of Christian virtue among his audience. He is concerned above all with an active form of virtue, one which contributes to the improvement of the commonweal over private considerations. However public and private virtue are never completely disassociated in Drysdale's mind. He seems to follow Smith in encouraging public virtue through the cultivation of individual self-command.

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[487] See Carlyle's comments in Carlyle, Alexander, The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, (ed.) Burton, John Hill (London & Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1910, pp. 299-305, reprinted by Thoemmes Antiquarian Press, 1990.

[488] See Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, chapters 2 and 3 continue to provide the definitive discussion of the Moderates' ascendancy.

For Drysdale, like Blair and Robertson, the maintenance of order lies at the heart of public and private fulfillment.

In his sermon, 'On the Doctrines of Christianity', Drysdale tied a love of virtue with adherence to doctrine to form an interesting response to critics who accused the Moderates of avoiding doctrinal issues. He fully explored the nature of the Trinity, the need for atonement and belief in final judgement and a future state. The completion of virtue by grace is central to his understanding of Christian life, and the tie between the two seems to reflect the fundamental link he makes between private and public virtue. The section concludes with a detailed discussion of Drysdale's most ambitious sermon, 'On the Distinction of Ranks,' which illustrates his adoption of many of the themes that John Millar and Adam Smith endorsed concerning the need for a division of labour and duty in society.

i

The Making of a Moderate Clergyman

John Drysdale was born on 29 April 1718 in Kirkcaldy to Rev. John Drysdale and Anne Ferguson, daughter of the Provost of the city. The young Drysdale was placed in a local parish school under the tutelage of David Miller, who had developed a sound reputation locally for preparing young men for university. Drysdale and Smith studied together under Miller, and despite Drysdale being five year's Smith's senior, the two forged a friendship that lasted until Drysdale's

[489] The Adam family had connections of its own in Kirkcaldy, and thus with Smith and Drysdale.

death.[490] According to his biographer, his son-in-law Andrew Dalzel,[491] Drysdale showed early promise as a classical scholar. He entered Edinburgh University in 1732 to follow the usual course of studies in languages, philosophy and divinity. He excelled at Greek and was singled out by the Professor of Greek, Colin Drummond, as a scholar of great promise.

However Drysdale's ambition at university was to prepare for the ministry. To this end he served as assistant to Rev. James Bannatyne, minister to the University, who encouraged Drysdale to develop the skills of oratory essential for a polite clergyman. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy in 1740, but immediately ran into difficulty in securing his first parish as a result of the changing fortunes of some of his patrons. It was not until 1748 that he was successfully presented as minister to the parish in Kirkliston on the recommendation of John, Earl of Hopetoun.

Drysdale's reputation as a preacher owed less to his eloquence than to his enthusiasm for his faith. According to Dalzel, Drysdale was a 'natural and unaffected' preacher, whose 'argumentative and rational' style provoked some initial discontent among the people of Kirkliston. It was suggested that he was merely interested in encouraging moral doctrine over specific Christian values, but he soon won his parishioners over by continually drawing their attention to the inseparable relationship between the two. He gained widespread approval for

[490] Primary evidence of Drysdale's firm friendship with Smith came from Drysdale's brother, George, who was interviewed by Dugald Stewart when Stewart prepared his Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith, L.L.D.

taking an active interest in the lives of his parishioners, and enjoyed a reputation as a committed family man. These qualities commended him to the locals, so much so that the Drysdale family remained in Kirkliston for fifteen years.

The relative tranquility of Drysdale's early years was disrupted between 1762-4 by a patronage controversy that pitted municipal and church authorities against each other. In 1763 the pulpit of Lady Yester's in Edinburgh fell vacant, and the Town Council sought to place Drysdale in the position. Controversy arose between the Church Courts, the traditional body that placed ministers in parishes, and the Town Council over which had the right to appoint ministers to burgh charges. The Council claimed sole right to do so over the strenuous objections of the Church Courts.

The Moderates took the unpopular step of publicly endorsing the Town Council's authority in the General Assembly. The Evangelical Assembly members, also now known as the Popular Party, contested the Council's authority in the General Kirk Sessions of the city. The ensuing battles between town and church, and Moderate and Popular interests, came to be known as the Drysdale Bustle and formed some of the most divisive episodes in eighteenth-century ecclesiastical politics. Ultimately the General Assembly of 1764 upheld the Town Council's claims, resulting in Drysdale's formal translation to Lady Yester's.[492]

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[491] It is interesting to note that Smith was also close to Dalzel and went to some trouble to assist the younger man with his career. [See, for example, Smith's letter to Edward Gibbon, 19 June 1783, in Smith, Adam, Correspondence, p. 267 and note.]

[492] See 'Case on the part of the Magistrates & Town Council of Edinburgh and ... callers of Mr. J. Drysdale presentee to be one of the ministers of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1764) and Minutes of the General Kirk Sessions of Edinburgh at their several Sederunts (Edinburgh, 1763). For a detailed discussion of the Drysdale Bustle, see Sher, Richard B., 'Moderates, Managers and Popular

Although conflicts between the Popular Party and the Moderates continued, the Moderates' dominance of the General Assembly was secure by the time the Drysdale affair was settled. It is important to note, however, that there were areas of co-operation between Moderate and Popular ministers, particularly at junior levels.

Younger Moderate ministers shared the Popular Party concerns that by sanctioning the authority of the Town Council in matters of patronage, the Assembly risked alienated congregations that could perceive a threat to order through a politicisation of Church authority. Taken to an extreme, a breakdown of authority could have threatened the unity of the Church, which was to be avoided at all costs. Furthermore, Popular ministers supported Drysdale's translation to Lady Yester's because of his personal merits. Moments of such agreement were rare but they testify to a common commitment among younger ministers to maintain the Church's integrity as a religious and social institution.

From 1764 Drysdale's fortunes in the Church improved rapidly. He assumed an increasingly large role in the management of ecclesiastical matters, becoming one of Robertson's key assistants in overseeing the affairs of the General Assembly. In recognition of Drysdale's efforts, he was made a doctor of divinity by Marischal College in Aberdeen in 1765. Upon the death of Rev. John Jardine in

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Politics in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh: The Drysdale 'Bustle' of the 1760s', in Dwyer, John, Mason, Roger and Murdoch, Alexander (eds) New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 179-209. For a discussion of Robertson's role in these affairs, see Cater, J., 'The Making of Principal Robertson in 1762 ...', in *Scottish Historical Review* 49 (1970), pp. 64-84.

1766, Drysdale was translated to the more prominent Tron Church in Edinburgh. He shared duties there with Rev. George Wishart,[493] Principal Clerk to the Church. That same year upon Robertson's urging, Lord Rockingham, the Prime Minister, recommended Drysdale to George III, who subsequently named him one of His Majesty's Chaplains in Scotland.

Drysdale served as Moderator of the General Assembly in 1773 and was elected joint Principal Clerk with Wishart in 1778, a position Drysdale occupied until his death. After Robertson withdrew from public life, Drysdale's voice became pre-eminent in Moderate circles and reputation for pacifying discontent within the Assembly was well established:

"There was something so cheerful, so unassuming, so benign, and, at the same time, so upright and decided in his manner, that he gained the esteem and good will of all who had any connection with him, without ever exciting the least degree of envy. Even such as were of different sentiments in Church affairs esteemed the man; and with several of these he maintained a very friendly intercourse. As his turn of thinking on all subjects was clear, acute and judicious, he was very expert in the method of conducting affairs."[494]

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[493] As we saw in chapter 4, George Wishart, his father, William (1660-1729), and his brother William, formed one of the more prominent families involved in the service of the Church of Scotland. All three were ministers, with William (the elder) serving as Moderator of the General Assembly on five occasions. William (the younger) preceded Robertson as Principal of Edinburgh University from 1737-53 and served as Moderator himself in 1745. He was known as one of the few Moderate ministers who actively explored theological issues while teaching at the University. He stressed the importance of placing Divine benevolence at the heart of understanding the role of God as 'Universal Governor' of the world. George, who served as Moderator in 1748, rejected the degree to which Robertson permitted patronage in the Church, but remained a loyal Moderate until his death.

[494] Dalzel, Andrew, 'An Account of the Life and Character of John Drysdale, D.D. read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, December 17, 1792' in Drysdale, John, Sermons, to which is prefixed an account of the author's life and character, 2 Vols. (Edinburgh: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, London; and E. Balfour, Edinburgh, 1793), Vol. I, p. xxix.

The respect of his colleagues was confirmed when they asked him to serve as Moderator for the second time in 1784. Despite failing health, he reluctantly agreed to their request.

"In the year 1784, it was apprehended that the choice of a Moderator of the General Assembly might occasion a dispute betwixt the two great parties in the Church. After deliberation, the leaders on the moderate side, pitched upon Dr. Drysdale as their candidate; thinking that, of all others, he was most likely to defeat the views of their antagonists. But they found great difficulty in prevailing on him to comply with their wishes. His modesty disposed him to decline the honour …; and he was afraid that his constitution, which never was robust, …, might not be equal to the fatigues in which he would necessarily be involved."[495]

Given the quality of Drysdale's published sermons, there is reason to believe that his abilities as a preacher were improved and enhanced by his lengthy service at Lady Yester's and the Tron Church. Dalzel confirms that Drysdale continued to preach from note cards, as Robertson did, which did not always permit as smooth a delivery of a sermon as one desired. But Drysdale enjoyed increasing popularity among his parishioners for his skilful analysis of Biblical texts, and applying the Bible's moral themes to the trials of daily life. Underscoring Drysdale's perception of his own duty as a minister and his idea of what society ought to be was his firm belief in the workings of Providence and his advocacy of public virtue. His commitment to both remained the characteristic element in his career as a Moderate minister.

[495] Ibid., p. xxxiii.

The Workings of Providence, Virtue and Doctrine in Society

In Drysdale's mind Christian life revolved around 'improvement and the confirmation of virtue', both in individual lives and on a wider social level. He recommended the cultivation of personal virtue as a means for securing social tranquility. Like Blair, Drysdale addressed matters of personal virtue assiduously, but his overriding concern with the maintenance of order in society highlighted his preference for encouraging constancy in the exercise of public duty.[496]

Like Robertson, Drysdale seems not to have defined public virtue directly. Rather than historicizing it as Robertson did, Drysdale 'socialises' public virtue in the sense that his understanding of it rests primarily in a social context. Public virtue involves the traditional elements of obedience to the established ecclesiastical and political order, and places the good of society above personal

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[496] Throughout the following discussion, Drysdale's emphasis of self-improvement through self-command seems to suggest that he was more comfortable about trusting in the powers of the conscience to determine virtuous behavior than Calvinists were traditionally. While Drysdale followed the traditional Moderate view in focussing on the cultivation of virtue, and he permitted a degree of reliance upon the conscience to achieve virtue, the theological tone of his sermons sometimes takes on almost Pelagian dimensions. The matter deserves more exploration than can be given in our context. Briefly, however, Pelagius, against whom St. Augustine argued vehemently, posited that a pure human nature could exist, fuelled by individual will capable of achieving perfection in this world. At the heart of Pelagian teaching was the "... belief that, when God created man in his own image, he endowed him with an innate capacity to choose between good and evil according to the promptings of his conscience ..., an innate capacity to make our own free choice between good and evil that we inherit from Adam, not the tainted legacy of original sin, and the sole effect of Adam's first sin upon us is that we habitually imitate him: it is not Adam's concupiscence (in the Augustinian sense) but his example in disobeying God's command which turns us away from good to evil. ... Thus it is theoretically possible for a man to become perfect by avoiding sin ... ." [See Pelagius, The Letters of Pelagius to His Followers (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1991), p. 7.]

gain. Yet the maintenance of public virtue relies heavily upon the cultivation of personal virtue on the part of each citizen.

In his sermons, Drysdale seems to use the terms of social order and public virtue synonymously. Thematic development takes place within the realm of public virtue for it is in the world that action is judged by Providence. The private virtues of charity, humility and diligence, for example, find their most complete manifestations through social action rather than private reflection, although Drysdale recommends the latter as essential to forming character. Religion is treated as a 'Providentially sanctioned' principle of virtue, a pillar of social justice and authority. And Heaven, Drysdale suggests, is a "... better country ...",[497] "... a society the members of which live in perfect harmony and union."[498]

The prominence of public virtue in Drysdale's thought is further strengthened by his belief that service to civil society fulfils the imperatives of Providence. To this end the Author of the Universe approves of the development of private virtue, which in turn fosters greater benevolence in society. (It is not clear whether or not Drysdale thought this fostering was due to the Invisible Hand.) Drysdale does not offer his readers a new understanding of Providence, but Providence for Drysdale does play an unusually direct and active role in the world. It is the role of Providence providing order to the universe that Drysdale

[497] Drysdale, John, 'On Hope of Heaven', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 403.
[498] Ibid., pp. 403-4.

seems to admire most, and its transcendent authority gives human life its ultimate meaning.

Throughout his sermons, the manner in which Drysdale discusses the cultivation of all forms of virtue and the maintenance of order is distinctly stoic in tone. His Christian faith seems to be invigorated by his appeal to stoic themes. In naming 'improvement and the confirmation of virtue' as the 'chief objects' of Christian life, Drysdale set himself up for criticism for being too rational in his approach to faith and morality. By describing methods for achieving virtue in stoic terms, he was further criticised for a lack of 'warmth of feeling' in his religious thought.

However, an examination of his sermons shows that Drysdale blended faith and stoicism effectively. He diligently reminded his audience that worldly virtue was completed by grace, and only by 'communing with one's own heart' could one find the wisdom that led to discernment of the Divine will.[499] On a secondary level, self-reflection and self-command regulated conduct through the exercise of conscience. This in turn countered vice. All served to assist the individual believer in the formation of a 'right mind', detached from worldly concerns, that preserved virtue, rejected arrogance and protected on from the false piety that tainted genuine devotion.

Given that Christ was the only being capable of perfect virtue, Drysdale warned his listeners that their quest for moral improvement was limited by the Fall of

[499] Drysdale, John, 'On Self-Examination', in his Sermons, Vol. II, pp. 29-35.

Adam. He assured them, however, that the Gospel promised recognition of their efforts:

"The ultimate end of the Gospel is the happiness of men; its immediate end is their purity and virtue, which are necessary in order to their happiness." Christ came to, "... establish, extend, and render every way full and complete, the great laws of righteousness." And his laws formed, "... the rule of life and duty, the standard of virtue, ... entire and perfect, as an object that men may aspire after, and a motive to unwearied diligence in the attempt."[500]

Drysdale's sermon, 'On the Uses of Affliction', is particularly useful in tying together Christian and stoic tenets. Affliction, he suggests, promotes virtue by forcing a 'sedate and thoughtful disposition' upon the sufferer, who must consider the situation in which he finds himself. This process calms the passions to 'reasonable bounds', which "... strengthens our minds with fortitude and constancy." Following Adam Smith, this sedateness encourages human beings to look upon their neighbours with the sympathy they wish to receive themselves. Reflection must be continual, and is dependent upon suffering to a certain degree in that "... nothing is found from experience so hostile to reflection as uninterrupted prosperity."[501] Drysdale's Christian Stoicism provides one with a type of 'foresight' or, "... an anticipation of evil, that [is] the best provision

[500] Drysdale, John, 'On the Doctrines of Christianity', in his Sermons, Vol. II, pp. 2-3.
[501] Reference for this paragraph, Drysdale, John, 'On the Uses of Affliction', in his Sermons, Vol. II, pp. 285-86.

against it, the best preparation for supporting it with constancy and fortitude, and the surest means of diminishing its force."[502] Ultimately:

"The man who disciplines his mind by making his thoughts familiar with affliction, while yet at a distance, is in the proper posture of defence, and in little danger of being disconcerted by it when it actually comes. But of this discipline the thoughtless and giddy are utterly incapable."[503]

It has been noted that for Drysdale the benefits of private virtue like humility, self-command, fortitude and constancy extend into the public sphere as humans interact. The social tranquility he sought was underscored by each citizen exercising these qualities. If we turn to Drysdale's discussion of Christian doctrine, his reliance upon grace completing earthly virtue becomes clearer.

The sermon opens with Drysdale's description of the Gospel's purpose to secure human happiness and encourage the acceptance of Christ as the world's chief guardian. Drysdale expands upon these points by examining the laws, doctrines and positive institutions of the Christian Church. The rigours of Christian discipline, he argues, check vice. Doctrine serves to inspire a love of virtue untainted by worldly considerations, most particularly the doctrine of the Trinity; that of atonement; and the doctrine of final judgement and a future life.

The subtleties involved in understanding the Trinity are too complex for any human mind to comprehend fully. Yet if the Trinity's separate entities are considered in isolation, Drysdale suggests, readers may better appreciate their

[502] Ibid., pp. 299-300.
[503] Ibid., p. 300.

direct relationship to virtue. God the Father, "... banishes that superstition to which the unenlightened minds of men are so prone, and which is the bane of all true virtue and happiness."[504] He eradicates fear through his defeat of superstition, clearing a path for the cultivation of virtue among believers. While some argue that God's actions have little reference to the minutiae of daily life, Drysdale argues the contrary. It is precisely in his attention to the details of human affairs that God provides us with intimations of his will. Interestingly, Drysdale suggests that it is the 'moral character' of God that provides us with the clearest example of the kind of lives we should lead:

"But our ideas of the moral character of God, our opinions concerning his goodness and wisdom, must make a strong impression on our own sense of goodness, and consequently on our affections and conduct."[505]

Christ as redeemer is the embodiment of pure virtue.[506] He is the purifier, whose character forms a unity of virtues form which his authority proceeds:

"His example brings all his precepts into one point of view, and presents us at once with the full and comprehensive idea of Christian perfection to guide our conduct in every step."[507]

The Holy Spirit serves to aid believers during times of struggle and weakness. It is the 'Supporter' of virtue and faith, engendering diligence and activity among

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[504] Drysdale, John, 'On the Doctrines of Christianity', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 7.
[505] Ibid., p. 10.
[506] It is interesting to note that here Drysdale's emphasis is on the incarnation of Christ rather than the atonement, or in other words, Christ the example of the perfect life; rather than the Christ who died that sinful, imperfect people might be justified and saved, despite their sin (as in Evangelical Calvinism).
[507] Drysdale, John, 'On the Doctrines of Christianity', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 13.

the faithful. It shares a profound bond with the human mind that underscores virtue:

"Such is the nature of the human mind, and so intimate its sense of relation to the Father of Spirits, the supreme and ruling Mind of the Universe, that when persuaded of his Divine preference and aid, it exerts itself with irresistible force."[508]

For all of the reassurances that key doctrines give believers, they must remain sensitive to the fact that many deliberately misinterpret the security offered through the Trinity for permissive ends. Under no circumstances does Drysdale permit reliance upon faith to diminish individual responsibility. He admonishes against complacency on the part of the faithful. The deliberate masking of personal wishes behind veil of false understanding of Divine will is the ultimate perversion of virtue in his eyes:

"Because our weakness is confessedly such as to render Divine aid necessary to enable us to perform our duty, it is concluded by some that we can do nothing, not so much as use the means of obtaining that aid. Thus this encouraging doctrine has been unhappily made the occasion of meanness of spirit, indolence, and despair. There cannot be conceived a perversion more monstrous, or of more pernicious tendency. It weakens the native spring of our minds, and checks every virtuous aspiration, every effort of the principle of goodness. ... But, scorning this degeneracy of mind, let the assured presence and powerful aid of the Divine Spirit banish sloth and despair, animate us with resolution, and brace our souls with every fresh vigour to run the noble career of righteousness, ..., and to hold steadily on in our course."[509]

The doctrine of atonement naturally involved the presence of sin in the world, and the manner in which believers repent for transgressions committed. Drysdale

[508] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

follows the Westminster Confession of Faith in his treatment of atonement. It was Providential design that sin was introduced into the world, and the degrees to which believers suffered misery in life were proportional to the "... progress of vice in the mind of each individual."[510] The punishment of Eden triggered a historical process of self-examination and spiritual reflection that revealed to humanity how much God deserved their constant veneration. The ultimate end of Providential design was the restoration of humanity to its original perfection, a process made possible only through the intervention of Christ. The key to atonement, Drysdale continues, is purity of heart which, with regular application, strengthens virtue:

> "Perfect goodness is in its nature reasonable, not swayed by partial moves, not directed to unfit objects, not wrought upon by flattery, or by mere supplication and intreaty: And such is the goodness of God which this Doctrine teaches. It is therefore altogether friendly to virtue, and to our instruction in righteousness."[511]

Drysdale concedes that reason alone offers 'feeble' proof of the doctrine of final judgement and resurrection. Knowledge of a future state is impossible without the Gospel, and it is faith alone that provides a foundation for accepting this doctrine. For those who believe, knowledge of a future state immediately induces righteous conduct in the sense that it returns believers 'to the performance of their duty'. Here again, Drysdale follows the Reformed view of future reward, but he seems to share a certain discomfort that other Moderates felt with the exclusivity of Calvinist predestination. Stoic ideals return: the

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[509] Ibid., pp. 16-17.
[510] Ibid., p. 18.
[511] Ibid., p. 22.

cultivation of virtue lies at the heart of proving oneself worthy of salvation. Righteousness is not necessarily limited to the members of a given denomination. Above all virtuous action must stem from the self-motivated and genuine intentions of believers.

Drysdale concludes the sermon by reminding readers that their lives are centred around a progress from grace to grace, however much they may seem to involve progress in virtuousness. The complementary nature of the relationship between the Gospel and virtue is the best guarantee of rediscovering our place in paradise:

"... It [the Gospel] animates the soul with the love of God and goodness, softens it into sympathy and the tenderest affections for our neighbours; it fills us with abhorrence of vice, and the most ardent endeavours after instruction in righteousness; and, to sum up all, ..., it bears the faithful Christian, ..., to the end of his hopes, the perfection and salvation of his immortal soul."[512]

The direct manner in which Drysdale emphasises the role of grace in the cultivation of virtue sets him slightly apart from Robertson and Blair. Blair acknowledged the limitations of reason and the hollowness of virtue incompleted by faith. Robertson stressed the need for the eradication of superstition through grace to strengthen virtue to the same degree as of Drysdale. In this sense, Drysdale seems to confront in a unique way challengers who denounced the Moderates for a lack of attention to doctrine.

With the importance of grace established, Drysdale later turns the attention of his readers to the final defining element of virtue that bridges public and private

worlds, charity. Blair relied upon charity as much as grace to inculcate virtue among individual believers and Drysdale follows his example. Charity, as Drysdale suggests, the foundation of benevolence and 'the vital force' of virtue, both of which find their purest expressions in the actions of 'disinterested hearts'.

More specifically, charity permeates daily life in that it is essential to the efficient and fair operations of justice, civility, temperance and morality. Charity provides justice with its impartiality; respect in civility; courage and resolution to fuel temperance; and wisdom to adhere to moral standards. From these arise a sense of contentment that sustains the individual:

"In the first place, as to the virtues of the individual, charity is justly said to be the bond of perfection. It will appear to comprehend all the other virtues within itself, and to be the principle whence they derive their greatest excellence, ... If it [an action] be considered as flowing from interested motives, it must appear quite destitute of everything amiable in a moral view, how useful soever at the same time it may be in a political one.[513] It is benevolence when it is the fair form we admire, which alone communicates grace and beauty to every action we call great, ..., or virtuous.[514] But to be more particular. It is this quality that gives to justice its chief value, renders it equal, impartial and uniform. ... What but charity gives to courage and resolution their chief value? It argues strength of mind, to be brave: ... [and], is indeed a ...heroic virtue. ... Farther: Charity insinuates itself even into the private virtues, and exerts an influence on those private duties which a man owes to himself. I mean those of temperance and moderation in the enjoyments of life."[515]

Charity also gives fullest value to the 'intellectual virtues' of knowledge and wisdom. Without charity, "... knowledge is nothing but idle speculation, and wisdom itself appears in no better light than the cunning and shrewdness of a

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[512] Ibid., p. 27.
[513] Here Drysdale departs from a Smithian toleration for self-interested behaviour.

selfish spirit.[516] Because charity also guarantees sincerity of motivation in social interaction, its value as a stabilising force becomes clear. The benevolence charity fosters underscores the positive laws of justice that define civilised societies:

"... it is the power of charity alone which can produce that general good understanding, and those vigourous efforts for public good, which are the real sinews of war, and form all the stability and happiness of peace. Without this, a nation can neither be strong abroad, nor safe at home; neither provided against the alarms of foreign invasion, nor the fury of civil wars."[517]

Therefore in the absence of charity or benevolence the lives of individual citizens and the operations of society would be reduced to suspicion, greed, deceit and selfishness - a Mandevillean scenario Drysdale rejected. In an ideal world, benevolence should serve as governing principle, an 'inward law', that prompts charitable action. In such an ideal world, fair-mindedness would reign supreme. Drysdale understands this is impossible, therefore it was the duty of each person to absorb the lessons of benevolence insofar as they are able for the sake of social unity and tranquility:

"It is necessary then that there be one public good, comprehending all private interests, and which is itself founded on their preservation; otherwise universal distrust must necessarily prevail, to which confusion and weakness and misery must succeed of course. ... On the other hand, it is the power of charity alone which can produce that general good understanding, and those vigourous efforts for public good, which are the real sinews of war, and form all the stability and

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[514] Drysdale seems to have in mind here a more traditional Christian, or Hutchesonian, concept of benevolence.
[515] Drysdale, John, 'On Charity', in his Sermons, Vol. 1, pp. 3-6.
[516] Ibid., p. 11.
[517] Ibid., p. 17.

happiness of peace. Without this, a nation can neither be strong abroad, nor safe at home; … ."[518]

From the content and tone of Drysdale's discussion of Providence, charity, grace and doctrine, it seems evident that Drysdale is not as concerned with originality in thought or pulpit eloquence as were Robertson and Blair. His primary calling was as a preacher, although he showed signs of moving away from Calvinist orthodoxy in his treatment of Christ. Because Drysdale did not have parallel professional interests in history or rhetoric as his colleagues had, Drysdale's methodology of connecting principles of doctrine with the pursuit of virtue is not as sophisticated as it might have been. Nevertheless, it is the contention of this section, that in making these connections, Drysdale provided his audience with tangible examples of how to live a moral and virtuous life, which in turn, contributed significantly to the propagation of Christian Stoicism.

iii

Smithian Influence as a Context for Drysdale's Sermon on Social Ranks

Drysdale's sermon, 'On the Distinction of Ranks', provides readers with an example of a minister as social conservative rather than moral arbiter or spiritual guide. In it Drysdale leaves aside his more theological speculations for a defence of the Scots' theory that the division of ranks provided the bedrock of social, economic and political stability. For our purposes, Drysdale's arguments in favour of a division of ranks are interesting for two reasons. As Richard Sher has

[518] Ibid., pp. 16-17. Drysdale's rather curious references to war may demonstrate the extent to

pointed out, the sermon provided the Moderates with their definitive treatment of the subject.[519] Second, Smithian undertones resonating through many of Drysdale's sermons seem to be more pronounced here, permitting the suggestion that Smith had a key influence upon his friend's intellectual deliberations, particularly concerning the advantages of commercial culture.[520]

The importance of Smithian influences becomes more significant given the scarcity of evidence about Drysdale's moral thought beyond the published sermons. The purely pastoral nature of Drysdale's career meant that there were no formal demands made upon him to record his reflections about social theory or morality. Unlike Blair or Robertson, he did not have lectures to give or histories to write. A search for notes Drysdale may have left concerning theory or philosophy proved fruitless. However viewing Drysdale's sermons as part of a body of Moderate (and Enlightenment) thought allows one to suggest that he accepted the general tenets of the literati's conjectural theory of history, and the theory of Providence William Robertson built into it. Therefore the conjectural

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which his loyalty to the established Hanoverian order went.

[519] See Sher, Richard B., Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, pp. 180-81.

[520] It is important here to distinguish between Smith's discussion about the division of ranks in society as it pertains to property and the social order from the intricate psychology of subordination that accompanied it. It is the latter that seems particularly relevant to Drysdale's sermons. The purpose of both the practical and the psychological arguments in favour of ranks was to highlight the set of interlocking institutions through which commercial society functioned. The implications of which included the development of a type of theory of subordination and mutual dependency among individuals, who served their interests and those of their neighbors either from self-interested (Smith) or benevolent motives (Drysdale). For further references to Smith on ranks, see *TMS* I.iii.2.1-6, IV.1.10, VI.ii.1.20, VI.iii.30; for a discussion of subordination necessary for civil government, see *WN* V.i.b.3 ff.; for references to the disorder that arose in societies not operating through a system of ranks, see Smith's discussion of Greece in History of Astronomy III.4-5. For Millar on ranks, see Millar, John, The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks (1779), 3rd ed., reprinted in Lehmann, William C., John Millar of Glasgow (Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

theory must contextualize Drysdale's advocacy of public virtue, despite his emphasis on conveying moral messages in utilitarian rather than historical terms.

Drysdale's obedience to the established Hanoverian order testifies further to his acceptance of the literati's conjectural theory in the sense that his sermons seem to acknowledge the superiority of commercial society over earlier stages of history. (His frequent criticism of superstition in more 'primitive ears' comes to mind.) Drysdale generally endorsed the positive effects of commerce described by Smith in *WN*: the spread of opulence, the advancement of liberty and the free exercise of individual responsibility. In focussing upon the ethical merits of virtue and order, Drysdale followed Smith's method, and the traditional Christian Stoic path, of confronting the moral challenges of commercial society by minimising sources of tension in it.

While the broad benefits of commerce were universally acknowledged, the Scots were well aware that the fully unified voice they sought to promote their interests eluded them. They differed in matters of degree or emphasis in intellectual arguments. Adam Ferguson differed in his interpretation of civic virtue from Robertson and Blair; Lord Kames examined commerce with a more suspicious eye than Smith; acceptance of Hume's key discussions on property and luxury were tempered by concerns over his scepticism. Drysdale's own experience in General Assembly politics made him equally sensitive to the need for diminishing tensions between Church factions.

It became all the more important for the literati to emphasise common areas of agreement as the complexity of commercial society grew more apparent. The tone of Drysdale's sermons reflects a sensitivity to this fact, and he followed the literati in measuring the benefits of the commercial era 'on balance' with those of earlier times. The comparative nature of this investigative approach introduced a permanent 'grey area' into the literati's search for a comprehensive evaluation of modern society. Hence the deep significance of promoting those areas of agreement that united the Moderates with their colleagues outside Church circles.

Assuming, then, that Smith's writings contributed significantly to Drysdale's understanding of social ranks and commerce, it seems reasonable to suggest that his influence did not end there. There are three key areas in which Drysdale's ethical thought incorporates themes that appeared in earlier editions of The Theory of Moral Sentiments[521]: the placement of self-command at the centre of a dutiful life; the importance of 'impartial' reflection in restraining passions; and a general appreciation for the role sympathy plays (and benevolence) in social interaction.

The importance of self-command in cultivating virtue and forming character was discussed previously. Drysdale recommended 'impartial' thought to his parishioners on a number of occasions, most notably when he warned against judging neighbours harshly and the dangers of sensual pleasures:

[521] Drysdale was dead by the time the final edition of *TMS* appeared in 1790.

"So hurtful to the worthiest dispositions of the human mind, is pride; and so requisite on the other hand is an humble and moderate opinion of ourselves, for preserving our judgement sufficiently cool to consider our neighbour's offensive conduct with impartiality; by which means, on discovering that conduct to be far less blamable than first appearances suggested, we shall be inspired with pity for the weakness of human nature, ..."[522]

And, in a reference apparently alluding to the impartial spectator:

"The very best among us, by an impartial attention to themselves, must be sensible of inward corruption, and of propensions pushing them on to the indulgence of vitious appetites."[523]

In many respects, the manner in which Drysdale described the function of benevolence in the passages on doctrine mirrored the role sympathy played for Smith, with the important distinctions that charity is essential in Drysdale's paradigm, and that charity retains pious characteristics not found in Smithian sympathy.[524] Together charity and benevolence are the key facilitators of social action for Drysdale as sympathy is for Smith. It was through a 'fellow feeling' with other members of society that one judged the prudence of given actions. It was through a similar thought process on the part of one's neighbours that one's own actions were interpreted. However, as John Dwyer reminds readers, it is important to remember that Smith rejected the notion of a Christian 'benevolent principle' in human nature:

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[522] Drysdale, John, 'On Humility', in his Sermons, Vol. I., p. 277.
[523] Drysdale, John, 'On the Miserable Consequences of Sensual Pleasures', in his Sermons, Vol. II, p. 236.
[524] This raises the question of where propriety fits in this instance into Drysdale's paradigm. He does not raise that matter here, but propriety comes into his sermon on ranks concerning the role of public leaders.

"... his [Smith's] treatment of sympathy and propriety rendered Christian benevolence largely irrelevant to the ethical order. Whereas benevolence might have been 'the sole principle of action in the Deity', it was only one of the 'many other motives' which characterised the virtue of 'so imperfect a creature as man'."

Indeed, "One of Adam Smith's most significant achievements was to tease ethical discourse away from the sanction of tradition and religious dogma."[525]

The implication of suggesting that Drysdale's ethical thought should be interpreted within a purely Smithian context is that, in fact, Drysdale borrowed heavily from his friend to outline the 'secular' dimensions of his moral reflections. Drysdale was hardly alone in so doing. An examination of his sermon on ranks will illustrate further aspects of Smith's influence upon his friend, *particularly* as the sermon falls so clearly within the context of conjectural history.

iv

'On the Distinction of Ranks'

The sermon, 'On the Distinction of Ranks', is essentially a polemic against those who opposed the Moderates' endorsement of a hierarchical organisation of society as the most effective means of meaning social order. The precise time Drysdale delivered the sermon is not clear, it reached a wider audience when it was published in the collected sermons in 1793.

Robertson was particularly taken with Drysdale's sermons. He assisted in their compilation and went to great lengths to promote their merits throughout Britain[526] despite the fact that by the time they appeared in print, Drysdale had been dead five years. Robertson singled out the sermon on ranks for special attention, in part most probably due to Drysdale's effective use of Christian Stoic themes to express himself. Robertson wrote:

"There is one Sermon, *On the Distinction of Ranks,* which seems if it had been written with foresight of some of the wild tenets of the present day, and may be considered as a very useful antidote against them."[527]

The sermon takes as its theme a passage from I Samuel ii.7, "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up."[528] It revolves around two central messages. First, that the quality of life among lower ranks is not necessarily improved by opposing a hierarchical structure in society. Second, because divisions of ranks are Providentially ordained, opposition to the system becomes a matter of blasphemy.

Drysdale opens the sermon with a reminder that any happiness humans find in life involves resignation to the will of God and ultimate obedience to Providential authority. The cultivation of self-command and tranquility of mind assists one in

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[525] Dwyer, John, The Age of the Passions: An Interpretation of Adam Smith and Scottish Enlightenment Culture, p. 47. (Dwyer's reference for phrases in single quotes: TMS [VII.ii.3.18.])

[526] See Robertson to Dalzel, 28 August 1792, in Dalzel, Andrew, History of the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1862), Vol. I, p. 96.

[527] Robertson to Bishop Douglas, 15 February 1793, British Library MS 2182:78-79 (Egerton papers).

achieving this resignation. Failure to appreciate these fundamental truths results in a disquieting of mind that triggers feelings of individual, and by extension social, discontent. This, in turn, threatens to 'loosen' the 'bands of society' naturally established by the division of ranks to the detriment of the poor and rich alike.

Inherent in criticism of ranks, Drysdale argues, is the suggestion that God acted in a 'partial' manner when he divided society into lower and upper orders, and ordained a system of Election among believers. (The basis of inequality and subordination was property.) Since all are equal before the throne of heaven (although clearly they were not vis-à-vis election), and since God provides for the happiness of his people in equal measure according to their station, Drysdale rejects the accusation of partiality out of hand. Furthermore, who are we, Drysdale asks, to question Providential design? If one does question it, the only rational conclusion one may reach is that divisions of rank among people "... are necessary for their welfare ... ."[529]

Drysdale then proceeds to illustrate the utility and necessity of different ranks and social conditions. He compares the advantages and disadvantages of the rich and poor, and attempts to show that happiness is equally attainable by both ranks. Indeed the two ranks are 'nearly on a level' in this regard provided they behave with propriety. The sermon concludes with the author's final reflections upon the theme from Samuel.

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[528] Drysdale, John, "On the Distinction of Ranks', in his Sermons, Vol. I, p. 271.
[529] Ibid., p. 274.

The argument for utility begins with the suggestion that happiness depends upon the 'proper exercise' of rational faculties and affections, and that this cannot be done in isolation. Man is 'made for society' and any full expression of an individual's faculties and talents occurs within the framework of society, therefore the first requisite of social well-being is having a secure means of subsistence. Providence 'kindly ordained' that man would not have subsistence:

> "... without labour, and without the application of care and reflection, of skill and industry, of patience and constancy of mind. Thus God Almighty has so disposed of all things, that while men are seeking only the necessary means of preserving their lives, they unavoidably find enjoyment in the exercise of their activity."[530]

Drysdale suggests that all individuals have talents, and therefore some basic means at their disposal, to work to provide themselves with material essentials. This is not to say, however, that being able to work frees one completely from external forces that may disrupt productivity, i.e., having adequate skills and opportunities, avoiding illness, etc. Though by nature, then, individuals start from a level playing field in terms of basic abilities, Drysdale acknowledges that differences among them arise from changing standards of experience, judgement and education. This directly affects the degrees to which people apply themselves to their work and the rewards derived from it.

While critics argued that this disparity placed the poorer classes at a permanent disadvantage in society, Drysdale continues to focus on the broader picture by

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[530] Ibid., p. 276.

drawing attention to the second major area of universal opportunity extending across social ranks, the protection of person and property under the law. Again, following Smith and the literati's theory of property and justice, Drysdale suggests that the secure environment required by all to conduct their affairs was preserved through the universal rule of law. The necessity of law and the need for reliable 'law-givers' were obvious, as was the need to avoid possible sources of corruption by dividing responsibility for making laws from administering. Hence the first concrete example of a division of labour, the distinction between 'Senators and Lawgivers'.

A series of further divisions of labour are reviewed, between magistrate and subject, hereditary benefactor and commoner, all for the purpose of defending the dangers of a deterioration of ranks, which revolves around the destabilization of individual security. Drysdale follows the classic Moderate model in suggesting that it is in the institutions of society that citizens must have faith to protect the interests of civil society. Essentially institutions were founded to protect the rights of citizens and to promote the fulfillment of duty to encourage order. While individuals may fail to act with consistent righteousness from day to day, the good purposes upon which institutions were built 'must prevail':

> "It is not from any particular wrong application of any appointment, that we are to form an opinion of its propriety; but from its spirit, manifest tendency and common effect. Taking this rule for our guide then, we must be convinced that the distinction of *high and low, rich and poor*, among men, is not only very useful, but absolutely requisite for the well-being of human society.[531]

[531] Ibid., p. 282.

With the primacy of law and the authority of institutions established, it falls to national leaders to protect society from external threats:

"As members of the same community are liable to encroach on each others rights, from interest, passion, and lust of power, so nations are, from similar motives, induced to attack each other. No nation can be happy ... unless it have both good government within itself, and force sufficient to repel assaults from without. For this purpose, it is requisite that particular persons be raised to stations of eminence, ..., for the public defence."[532]

The qualities required of national leaders form another strong proof for a need of ranks in society in the sense that the 'wisdom, courage, and patience' necessary to lead are enjoyed by a limited number of people of considerable experience and virtue. The direct influence leaders have on the 'proper exertion' of citizens' 'rational faculties' is clear. However it is not sufficient to for national leaders to fulfil their professional obligations passively. They have a duty to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes personal and public improvement at all times, a task which only the seasoned 'man of virtue' might achieve.

"This subject might be pursued to great length; and if we were to carry our reflections beyond what relates to the support and peace of human society, and extend them to the improvements of which it is capable, a wide field would be discovered for distinctions amongst men, according to the degrees of sound knowledge, and useful art in which they excel."[533]

This lengthy section concludes Drysdale's efforts to prove directly the merits of social divisions. The 'defensive' tone of the following section on the

[532] Ibid., pp. 282-83.
[533] Ibid., pp. 283-84.

comparative advantages and disadvantages between rich and poor suggests that Drysdale was sensitive about the degree to which his audience accepted the proposition that all ranks enjoyed an equal 'possibility' of happiness. As stated earlier, to argue that happiness must be measured within the circumscribed framework of one's rank seemed to thwart positive ambition or improvement. The tendency to equate wealth with happiness, however, was Drysdale's concern here. He rejects the naïve view that the rich are always happy. If one reviewed the 'constituent elements' of happiness, it is mostly likely that the poor fare better:

> "Sound health, freedom from disquieting passions, gratification of just desires, and mutual kindness, joined to the practice of piety and virtue, may be considered ... the sum of human happiness in this world."[534]

With respect to health, it is likely that physical labour ensures the good health of the worker over the less active man of affairs. Regular exercise releases the passions and frees the labourer from most anxieties. If the labourer goes beyond his allotted place in society, if his desires increase beyond those he is capable of fulfilling, then he puts at risk the safety of a tranquil life. Desires increase in proportion to one's means for achieving them, therefore the rich are at greater risk of losing their self-command through envy. Drysdale suggests, however, that these ideas do not contradict the positive encouragement of improvement. It is simply that improvement, or envy, tends to operate within one's social spectrum.

By weaving some of the themes from his sermons on doctrine and charity into his current discussion, Drysdale ends the sermon on ranks with the reminder that the ultimate source of human happiness lies in the cultivation of virtue and practice of piety. The absence of either leads to the deterioration of Christian benevolence[535] that strengthens the social bonds. The descent into a world of Mandevillean self-conceit and self-delusion is only prevented by the giving of genuine mutual aid based on respect among citizens. At the national level, leaders must act with singular propriety lest they lose the support and obedience of the public.

Drysdale's sermon on ranks provides an accessible defence of Moderate priorities, while illustrating that there was a place for virtue and piety in the commercial world. Given his loyalty to the Church of Scotland, it is likely that he was as interested in reminding the merchants of Edinburgh of this fact, as he was in promoting the values that protected the commercial way of life. Like Blair and Robertson, Drysdale's Christian Stoicism was perhaps ultimately concerned with the refutation of the notion that polite commercial values were artificial and irreconcilable with Christianity.

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[534] Ibid., p. 285.

Final Remarks on Drysdale

In a forthright manner, John Drysdale promoted the Christian Stoic agenda within the Church of Scotland with a characteristic unsentimentality that distinguished his sermons from those of his more eloquent peers. Drysdale was a pragmatist, who focussed not upon the finer points of the Enlightenment's wider philosophical debates, but on the means through which the literati's theories about society could be applied to the lives of his parishioners. By remaining attentive to the central tenets of Adam Smith's system of ethics in his religious reflections, Drysdale cast Christian Stoicism in a particularly lucid and accessible light, making him highly popular in Edinburgh society. In this sense, Drysdale might be considered a typical Moderate, i.e., a successful Moderate leader largely because his shrewd and worldly common sense appealed to the rank and file among the clergy as well as to private citizens.

It becomes clear from a reading of Drysdale's sermons that while he was less interested in the more intangible elements of theological reasoning, his dedication to key Christian doctrine was complete. He defended this doctrine by drawing parallels between the ideal Christian life and models of virtuous citizenship, which confirmed a preoccupation with interpreting Christian Stoicism within the context of civil society. Drysdale's Christian Stoicism is rigorous, active and impatient, and seems to focus as much upon the 'end results' of life as it attaches

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[535] This should perhaps be distinguished from Smithian benevolence which relies more directly on positive self-interested motivation.

importance to progress and improvement. Through his endorsement of the utility of self-command, Drysdale presents an interpretation of life as a careful balancing of expectations with realistic means for achieving them.

Conclusion: the Moderates' Intellectual Debts to Smith with regard to Christian Stoicism

We know that Blair, Drysdale and Robertson shared Hutcheson and Smith's practical moral priorities, but their primary obligation as clergymen was to promote a specifically Christian interpretation of virtue in society that was accessible, tangible and compatible with the experiences of their congregations. In this sense, as John Dwyer has pointed out, the Moderates were far more aware than Smith needed to be of the difficulties of applying theory to daily life.[536] For the sake of conveying their message, Christian Stoicism at its most elementary level simply highlighted the necessity of religious belief to the moral order, while upholding (at times weakly) the unique authority of revelation.

While we have seen that Smith and the Moderates differed in their respective accounts of the nature of religious belief, they acknowledged that from the point of view of promoting virtue, religion had a useful role to play in civil society. J. Ralph Lindgren has argued convincingly that this common ground permitted the Moderates to capitalise on areas in which Smith thought religion was 'justifiable', most notably in moral education. Clergymen who embodied the

[536] Dwyer, John, 'The Heavenly City of Eighteenth Century Moderate Divines', in Dwyer, John and Sher, Richard B. (eds), Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland, p. 315.

virtuous spirit so essential to polite culture were helpful role models for the community at large. Insofar as religious institutions supported clergymen in their efforts, they provided a necessary service. But, Lindgren rightly suggests, Smith insisted that the legitimacy or authority of religious institutions only proceeded from the 'propriety of practices' deriving from the moral norms of civil society.[537]

This should not, according to Dwyer, lead to the conclusion that Smith considered religion a 'mirror image' of morality. On the contrary, the extent to which Smith confronts the complexity of religion throughout his works suggests his treatment of religion and faith was 'far more subtle than that'. The further suggestion might be made that it was Smith's subtlety that so appealed to his Moderate colleagues, for included within it was Smith's appreciation of the fact that from a contemporary point of view, the 'moral integrity' of society was incomplete without religion.[538]

With these points in mind, it is possible to make a number of suggestions about the compatibility between Christian Stoicism and Smith's moral theory. While the Moderates recognised the need to reply to the challenges of their more sceptical colleagues, they embraced the literati's interpretation of morality as an active rather than reactive social force. Although they appreciated Smith's objections to organised religion, Smith left a sufficiently significant space in his moral philosophy for broad Christian principles: a space within which, it is

[537] Lindgren, J. Ralph, The Social Philosophy of Adam Smith, pp. 141-43.
[538] These points and quoted phrases are Dwyer's.

suggested, the Moderates thought Christian Stoicism operated. While it has been frequently acknowledged that Smith did not deliberately set out to leave this place for organised faith in his scheme, he did not seem to wish to define a commercial culture devoid of God either. This left the Moderates an opportunity to place their interpretation of Christian ethics within the philosophical framework of the Scottish 'science of man'. In other words, Smith's treatment of morals and ethics not only lent itself to Christian Stoicism from a Moderate point of view, but it was essential to its philosophical coherence.

Conclusion

The motivations for economic activity in society have been a matter of central concern to historians, moralists and theologians throughout early modern European history. Tensions arising between self-interested and virtuous motives for commercial activity in eighteenth century Scottish society have been the primary concern of this thesis. Particular attention has been paid to the contributions made by the Moderate Clergy to defining what the character of 'commercial man' ought to have been in an Enlightenment context.

The Moderates relied upon Christian Stoicism to make connections between the polite social ethics of commercial society and the Christian principles to which they were deeply committed. Christian Stoicism is often discussed by Enlightenment historians as a system of practical moralising, or as a tool for the promotion of obedience to the Hanoverian order in Scotland. It has been argued here, however, that these interpretations of Christian Stoicism belie the depths to which the Moderates considered matters of virtue, morality and faith in society, and the degree to which they reflected upon the relationship of Christian Stoicism to the Scots' 'science of man'.

The thesis has attempted to advance our understanding of Enlightenment thought by examining the role Christian Stoicism played in Hugh Blair and John Drysdale's sermons, and in William Robertson's An Historical Disquisition

Concerning the Knowledge Which the Ancients Had of India. The image of Christian Stoicism that emerges from these texts is that of a rather complex construct that blended private and public virtue with Christian morality to underscore a necessary connection between faith and social ethics in commercial society.

There are philosophical imperfections within Christian Stoicism in terms of describing fully the manner in which public and private virtue blended with religious priorities; these imperfections reflect the traditionally problematic relationship between faith and reason in history. Rather than focussing on matters that were philosophically irreconcilable, the Moderates highlighted those areas of compatibility between polite ethics and Christianity to promote the theories of progress and the correct practical principles by which the members of commercial society lived.

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